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REPRESENTATIVE MEN

AND

MISCELLANIES

BY

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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REPRESENTATIVE MEN

SEVEN LECTURES

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I

USES OF GREAT MEN

USES OF GREAT MEN

IT is natural to believe in great men. If the companions of our childhood should turn out to be heroes, and their condition regal it would not surprise us. All mythology opens with demigods, and the circumstance is high and poetic; that is, their genius is paramount. In the legends of the Gautama, the first men ate the earth and found it deliciously sweet.

Nature seems to exist for the excellent. The world is upheld by the veracity of good men: they make the earth wholesome. They who lived with them found life glad and nutritious. Life is sweet and tolerable only in our belief in such society; and, actually or ideally, we manage to live with superiors. We call our children and our lands by their names. Their names are wrought into the verbs of language, their works and effigies are in our houses, and every circumstance of the day recalls an anecdote of them.

The search after the great man is the dream of youth and the most serious occupation of manhood. We travel into foreign parts to find his works,—if possible, to get a glimpse of him. But we are put off with fortune instead. You

say, the English are practical; the Germans are hospitable; in Valencia the climate is delicious; and in the hills of the Sacramento there is gold for the gathering. Yes, but I do not travel to find comfortable, rich and hospitable people, or clear sky, or ingots that cost too much. But if there were any magnet that would point to the countries and houses where are the persons who are intrinsically rich and powerful, I would sell all and buy it, and put myself on the road to-day.[1]

The race goes with us on their credit. The knowledge that in the city is a man who invented the railroad, raises the credit of all the citizens. But enormous populations, if they be beggars, are disgusting, like moving cheese, like hills of ants or of fleas, — the more, the worse.[2]

Our religion is the love and cherishing of these patrons. The gods of fable are the shining moments of great men.[3] We run all our vessels into one mould. Our colossal theologies of Judaism, Christism, Buddhism, Mahometism, are the necessary and structural action of the human mind. The student of history is like a man going into a warehouse to buy cloths or carpets. He fancies he has a new article. If he go to the factory, he shall find that his new stuff still re-

peats the scrolls and rosettes which are found on the interior walls of the pyramids of Thebes. Our theism is the purification of the human mind. Man can paint, or make, or think, nothing but man. He believes that the great material elements had their origin from his thought. And our philosophy finds one essence collected or distributed.

If now we proceed to inquire into the kinds of service we derive from others, let us be warned of the danger of modern studies, and begin low enough. We must not contend against love, or deny the substantial existence of other people.[1] I know not what would happen to us. We have social strengths. Our affection towards others creates a sort of vantage or purchase which nothing will supply. I can do that by another which I cannot do alone. I can say to you what I cannot first say to myself. Other men are lenses through which we read our own minds. Each man seeks those of different quality from his own, and such as are good of their kind ; that is, he seeks other men, and the *otherest*. The stronger the nature, the more it is reactive. Let us have the quality pure. A little genius let us leave alone. A main

difference betwixt men is, whether they attend their own affair or not. Man is that noble endogenous plant which grows, like the palm, from within outward. His own affair, though impossible to others, he can open with celerity and in sport. It is easy to sugar to be sweet and to nitre to be salt. We take a great deal of pains to waylay and entrap that which of itself will fall into our hands. I count him a great man who inhabits a higher sphere of thought, into which other men rise with labor and difficulty; he has but to open his eyes to see things in a true light and in large relations, whilst they must make painful corrections and keep a vigilant eye on many sources of error. His service to us is of like sort. It costs a beautiful person no exertion to paint her image on our eyes; yet how splendid is that benefit! It costs no more for a wise soul to convey his quality to other men. And every one can do his best thing easiest. "*Peu de moyens, beaucoup d'effet.*" He is great who is what he is from nature, and who never reminds us of others.

But he must be related to us, and our life receive from him some promise of explanation. I cannot tell what I would know; but I have observed there are persons who, in their character

and actions, answer questions which I have not skill to put. One man answers some question which none of his contemporaries put, and is isolated. The past and passing religions and philosophies answer some other question. Certain men affect us as rich possibilities, but helpless to themselves and to their times, — the sport perhaps of some instinct that rules in the air ; — they do not speak to our want.[1] But the great are near ; we know them at sight. They satisfy expectation and fall into place. What is good is effective, generative ; makes for itself room, food and allies. A sound apple produces seed, — a hybrid does not. Is a man in his place, he is constructive, fertile, magnetic, inundating armies with his purpose, which is thus executed. The river makes its own shores, and each legitimate idea makes its own channels and welcome, — harvests for food, institutions for expression, weapons to fight with and disciples to explain it. The true artist has the planet for his pedestal ; the adventurer, after years of strife, has nothing broader than his own shoes.

Our common discourse respects two kinds of use or service from superior men. Direct giving is agreeable to the early belief of men ; direct giving of material or metaphysical aid, as of

health, eternal youth, fine senses, arts of healing, magical power and prophecy. The boy believes there is a teacher who can sell him wisdom. Churches believe in imputed merit. But, in strictness, we are not much cognizant of direct serving. Man is endogenous, and education is his unfolding. The aid we have from others is mechanical compared with the discoveries of nature in us. What is thus learned is delightful in the doing, and the effect remains. Right ethics are central and go from the soul outward. Gift is contrary to the law of the universe. Serving others is serving us. I must absolve me to myself. 'Mind thy affair,' says the spirit: — 'coxcomb, would you meddle with the skies, or with other people?' Indirect service is left.[1] Men have a pictorial or representative quality, and serve us in the intellect. Behmen[2] and Swedenborg saw that things were representative. Men are also representative; first, of things, and secondly, of ideas.

As plants convert the minerals into food for animals, so each man converts some raw material in nature to human use. The inventors of fire, electricity, magnetism, iron, lead, glass, linen, silk, cotton; the makers of tools; the inventor of decimal notation; the geometer;

the engineer; the musician, — severally make an easy way for all, through unknown and impossible confusions. Each man is by secret liking connected with some district of nature, whose agent and interpreter he is; as Linnæus, of plants; Huber, of bees; Fries, of lichens; Van Mons, of pears; Dalton, of atomic forms; Euclid, of lines; Newton, of fluxions.

A man is a centre for nature, running out threads of relation through every thing, fluid and solid, material and elemental. The earth rolls; every clod and stone comes to the meridian: so every organ, function, acid, crystal, grain of dust, has its relation to the brain. It waits long, but its turn comes. Each plant has its parasite, and each created thing its lover and poet. Justice has already been done to steam, to iron, to wood, to coal, to loadstone, to iodine, to corn and cotton; but how few materials are yet used by our arts! The mass of creatures and of qualities are still hid and expectant.[1] It would seem as if each waited, like the enchanted princess in fairy tales, for a destined human deliverer. Each must be disenchanted and walk forth to the day in human shape. In the history of discovery, the ripe and latent truth seems to have fashioned a brain for itself.[2] A

magnet must be made man in some Gilbert, or Swedenborg, or Oersted, before the general mind can come to entertain its powers.[1]

If we limit ourselves to the first advantages, a sober grace adheres to the mineral and botanic kingdoms, which, in the highest moments, comes up as the charm of nature, — the glitter of the spar, the sureness of affinity, the veracity of angles. Light and darkness, heat and cold, hunger and food, sweet and sour, solid, liquid and gas, circle us round in a wreath of pleasures, and, by their agreeable quarrel, beguile the day of life. The eye repeats every day the first eulogy on things, — "He saw that they were good." We know where to find them; and these performers are relished all the more, after a little experience of the pretending races. We are entitled also to higher advantages. Something is wanting to science until it has been humanized. The table of logarithms is one thing, and its vital play in botany, music, optics and architecture, another. There are advancements to numbers, anatomy, architecture, astronomy, little suspected at first, when, by union with intellect and will, they ascend into the life and reappear in conversation, character and politics.[2]

But this comes later. We speak now only of our acquaintance with them in their own sphere and the way in which they seem to fascinate and draw to them some genius who occupies himself with one thing, all his life long. The possibility of interpretation lies in the identity of the observer with the observed.[1] Each material thing has its celestial side; has its translation, through humanity, into the spiritual and necessary sphere where it plays a part as indestructible as any other. And to these, their ends, all things continually ascend. The gases gather to the solid firmament: the chemic lump arrives at the plant, and grows; arrives at the quadruped, and walks; arrives at the man, and thinks. But also the constituency determines the vote of the representative. He is not only representative, but participant. Like can only be known by like. The reason why he knows about them is that he is of them; he has just come out of nature, or from being a part of that thing.[2] Animated chlorine knows of chlorine, and incarnate zinc, of zinc. Their quality makes his career; and he can variously publish their virtues, because they compose him. Man, made of the dust of the world, does not forget his origin; and all that is yet inanimate will one

day speak and reason. Unpublished nature will have its whole secret told. Shall we say that quartz mountains will pulverize into innumerable Werners, Von Buchs and Beaumonts, and the laboratory of the atmosphere holds in solution I know not what Berzeliuses and Davys?

Thus we sit by the fire and take hold on the poles of the earth. This *quasi* omnipresence supplies the imbecility of our condition. In one of those celestial days when heaven and earth meet and adorn each other, it seems a poverty that we can only spend it once: we wish for a thousand heads, a thousand bodies, that we might celebrate its immense beauty in many ways and places. Is this fancy? Well, in good faith, we are multiplied by our proxies. How easily we adopt their labors! Every ship that comes to America got its chart from Columbus. Every novel is a debtor to Homer. Every carpenter who shaves with a fore-plane borrows the genius of a forgotten inventor. Life is girt all round with a zodiac of sciences, the contributions of men who have perished to add their point of light to our sky. Engineer, broker, jurist, physician, moralist, theologian, and every man, inasmuch as he has any science, is a definer and map-maker of the latitudes

and longitudes of our condition. These road-makers on every hand enrich us. We must extend the area of life and multiply our relations. We are as much gainers by finding a new property in the old earth as by acquiring a new planet.[1]

We are too passive in the reception of these material or semi-material aids. We must not be sacks and stomachs. To ascend one step, — we are better served through our sympathy. Activity is contagious. Looking where others look, and conversing with the same things, we catch the charm which lured them. Napoleon said, "You must not fight too often with one enemy, or you will teach him all your art of war." Talk much with any man of vigorous mind, and we acquire very fast the habit of looking at things in the same light, and on each occurrence we anticipate his thought.

Men are helpful through the intellect and the affections. Other help I find a false appearance. If you affect to give me bread and fire, I perceive that I pay for it the full price, and at last it leaves me as it found me, neither better nor worse: but all mental and moral force is a positive good. It goes out from you, whether you will or not, and profits me whom you never

thought of.[1] I cannot even hear of persona. vigor of any kind, great power of performance, without fresh resolution. We are emulous of all that man can do. Cecil's saying of Sir Walter Raleigh, "I know that he can toil terribly," is an electric touch. So are Clarendon's portraits, — of Hampden, "who was of an industry and vigilance not to be tired out or wearied by the most laborious, and of parts not to be imposed on by the most subtle and sharp, and of a personal courage equal to his best parts;" — of Falkland, "who was so severe an adorer of truth, that he could as easily have given himself leave to steal, as to dissemble." We cannot read Plutarch without a tingling of the blood; and I accept the saying of the Chinese Mencius: "A sage is the instructor of a hundred ages. When the manners of Loo are neard of, the stupid become intelligent, and the wavering, determined."

This is the moral of biography; yet it is hard for departed men to touch the quick like our own companions, whose names may not last as long. What is he whom I never think of? Whilst in every solitude are those who succor our genius and stimulate us in wonderful manners. There is a power in love to divine an-

other's destiny better than that other can, and, by heroic encouragements, hold him to his task. What has friendship so signal as its sublime attraction to whatever virtue is in us? We will never more think cheaply of ourselves, or of life.[1] We are piqued to some purpose, and the industry of the diggers on the railroad will not again shame us.[2]

Under this head too falls that homage, very pure as I think, which all ranks pay to the hero of the day, from Coriolanus and Gracchus down to Pitt, Lafayette, Wellington, Webster, Lamartine. Hear the shouts in the street! The people cannot see him enough. They delight in a man. Here is a head and a trunk! What a front! what eyes! Atlantean shoulders, and the whole carriage heroic, with equal inward force to guide the great machine![3] This pleasure of full expression to that which, in their private experience, is usually cramped and obstructed, runs also much higher, and is the secret of the reader's joy in literary genius. Nothing is kept back. There is fire enough to fuse the mountain of ore. Shakspeare's principal merit may be conveyed in saying that he of all men best understands the English language, and can say what he will. Yet these unchoked channels

and floodgates of expression are only health or fortunate constitution. Shakspeare's name suggests other and purely intellectual benefits.

Senates and sovereigns have no compliment, with their medals, swords and armorial coats, like the addressing to a human being thoughts out of a certain height, and presupposing his intelligence.[1] This honor, which is possible in personal intercourse scarcely twice in a lifetime, genius perpetually pays; contented if now and then in a century the proffer is accepted. The indicators of the values of matter are degraded to a sort of cooks and confectioners, on the appearance of the indicators of ideas. Genius is the naturalist or geographer of the supersensible regions, and draws their map; and, by acquainting us with new fields of activity, cools our affection for the old. These are at once accepted as the reality, of which the world we have conversed with is the show.

We go to the gymnasium and the swimming-school to see the power and beauty of the body; there is the like pleasure and a higher benefit from witnessing intellectual feats of all kinds; as feats of memory, of mathematical combination, great power of abstraction, the transmutings of the imagination, even versatility and

concentration, — as these acts expose the invisible organs and members of the mind, which respond, member for member, to the parts of the body. For we thus enter a new gymnasium, and learn to choose men by their truest marks, taught, with Plato, "to choose those who can, without aid from the eyes or any other sense, proceed to truth and to being." Foremost among these activities are the summersaults, spells and resurrections wrought by the imagination. When this wakes, a man seems to multiply ten times or a thousand times his force. It opens the delicious sense of indeterminate size and inspires an audacious mental habit. We are as elastic as the gas of gunpowder, and a sentence in a book, or a word dropped in conversation, sets free our fancy, and instantly our heads are bathed with galaxies, and our feet tread the floor of the Pit.[1] And this benefit is real because we are entitled to these enlargements, and once having passed the bounds shall never again be quite the miserable pedants we were.

The high functions of the intellect are so allied that some imaginative power usually appears in all eminent minds, even in arithmeticians of the first class, but especially in meditative men of an intuitive habit of thought. This

class serve us, so that they have the perception of identity and the perception of reaction. The eyes of Plato, Shakspeare, Swedenborg, Goethe, never shut on either of these laws. The perception of these laws is a kind of metre of the mind. Little minds are little through failure to see them.

Even these feasts have their surfeit. Our delight in reason degenerates into idolatry of the herald. Especially when a mind of powerful method has instructed men, we find the examples of oppression. The dominion of Aristotle, the Ptolemaic astronomy, the credit of Luther, of Bacon, of Locke; — in religion the history of hierarchies, of saints, and the sects which have taken the name of each founder, are in point. Alas! every man is such a victim. The imbecility of men is always inviting the impudence of power. It is the delight of vulgar talent to dazzle and to blind the beholder. But true genius seeks to defend us from itself. True genius will not impoverish, but will liberate, and add new senses.[1] If a wise man should appear in our village he would create, in those who conversed with him, a new consciousness of wealth, by opening their eyes to unobserved advantages; he would establish a sense of im-

movable equality, calm us with assurances that we could not be cheated; as every one would discern the checks and guaranties of condition. The rich would see their mistakes and poverty, the poor their escapes and their resources.

But nature brings all this about in due time. Rotation is her remedy. The soul is impatient of masters and eager for change. Housekeepers say of a domestic who has been valuable, "She had lived with me long enough." We are tendencies, or rather, symptoms, and none of us complete. We touch and go, and sip the foam of many lives. Rotation is the law of nature. When nature removes a great man, people explore the horizon for a successor; but none comes, and none will. His class is extinguished with him. In some other and quite different field the next man will appear; not Jefferson, not Franklin, but now a great salesman, then a road-contractor, then a student of fishes, then a buffalo-hunting explorer, or a semi-savage Western general. Thus we make a stand against our rougher masters; but against the best there is a finer remedy. The power which they communicate is not theirs. When we are exalted by ideas, we do not owe this to Plato, but to the idea, to which also Plato was debtor.[1]

I must not forget that we have a special debt to a single class. Life is a scale of degrees. Between rank and rank of our great men are wide intervals. Mankind have in all ages attached themselves to a few persons who either by the quality of that idea they embodied or by the largeness of their reception were entitled to the position of leaders and law-givers. These teach us the qualities of primary nature, — admit us to the constitution of things. We swim, day by day, on a river of delusions and are effectually amused with houses and towns in the air, of which the men about us are dupes. But life is a sincerity. In lucid intervals we say, 'Let there be an entrance opened for me into realities;' I have worn the fool's cap too long. We will know the meaning of our economies and politics. Give us the cipher, and if persons and things are scores of a celestial music, let us read off the strains. We have been cheated of our reason; yet there have been sane men, who enjoyed a rich and related existence. What they know, they know for us. With each new mind, a new secret of nature transpires; nor can the Bible be closed until the last great man is born. These men correct the delirium of the animal spirits, make us considerate and engage us to

new aims and powers. The veneration of mankind selects these for the highest place. Witness the multitude of statues, pictures and memorials which recall their genius in every city, village, house and ship:—

> "Ever their phantoms arise before us,
> Our loftier brothers, but one in blood;
> At bed and table they lord it o'er us
> With looks of beauty and words of good."[1]

How to illustrate the distinctive benefit of ideas, the service rendered by those who introduce moral truths into the general mind?—I am plagued, in all my living, with a perpetual tariff of prices. If I work in my garden and prune an apple-tree, I am well enough entertained, and could continue indefinitely in the like occupation. But it comes to mind that a day is gone, and I have got this precious nothing done. I go to Boston or New York and run up and down on my affairs: they are sped, but so is the day.[2] I am vexed by the recollection of this price I have paid for a trifling advantage. I remember the *peau d'âne* on which whoso sat should have his desire, but a piece of the skin was gone for every wish.[3] I go to a convention of philanthropists. Do what I can, I cannot keep my eyes off the clock. But if

there should appear in the company some gentle soul who knows little of persons or parties, of Carolina or Cuba, but who announces a law that disposes these particulars, and so certifies me of the equity which checkmates every false player, bankrupts every self-seeker, and apprises me of my independence on any conditions of country, or time, or human body, — that man liberates me; I forget the clock. I pass out of the sore relation to persons. I am healed of my hurts. I am made immortal by apprehending my possession of incorruptible goods. Here is great competition of rich and poor. We live in a market, where is only so much wheat, or wool, or land; and if I have so much more, every other must have so much less. I seem to have no good without breach of good manners. Nobody is glad in the gladness of another, and our system is one of war, of an injurious superiority. Every child of the Saxon race is educated to wish to be first. It is our system; and a man comes to measure his greatness by the regrets, envies and hatreds of his competitors. But in these new fields there is room: here are no self-esteems, no exclusions.

I admire great men of all classes, those who stand for facts, and for thoughts; I like rough

and smooth, "Scourges of God," and "Darlings of the human race." I like the first Cæsar;[1] and Charles V., of Spain; and Charles XII., of Sweden; Richard Plantagenet; and Bonaparte, in France. I applaud a sufficient man, an officer equal to his office; captains, ministers, senators. I like a master standing firm on legs of iron, well-born, rich, handsome, eloquent, loaded with advantages, drawing all men by fascination into tributaries and supporters of his power.[2] Sword and staff, or talents sword-like or staff-like, carry on the work of the world. But I find him greater when he can abolish himself and all heroes, by letting in this element of reason, irrespective of persons, this subtilizer and irresistible upward force, into our thought, destroying individualism; the power so great that the potentate is nothing. Then he is a monarch who gives a constitution to his people; a pontiff who preaches the equality of souls and releases his servants from their barbarous homages; an emperor who can spare his empire.

But I intended to specify, with a little minuteness, two or three points of service. Nature never spares the opium or nepenthe, but wherever she mars her creature with some deformity

or defect, lays her poppies plentifully on the bruise, and the sufferer goes joyfully through life, ignorant of the ruin and incapable of seeing it, though all the world point their finger at it every day. The worthless and offensive members of society, whose existence is a social pest, invariably think themselves the most ill-used people alive, and never get over their astonishment at the ingratitude and selfishness of their contemporaries. Our globe discovers its hidden virtues, not only in heroes and archangels, but in gossips and nurses. Is it not a rare contrivance that lodged the due inertia in every creature, the conserving, resisting energy, the anger at being waked or changed? Altogether independent of the intellectual force in each is the pride of opinion, the security that we are right. Not the feeblest grandame, not a mowing idiot,[1] but uses what spark of perception and faculty is left, to chuckle and triumph in his or her opinion over the absurdities of all the rest. Difference from me is the measure of absurdity. Not one has a misgiving of being wrong. Was it not a bright thought that made things cohere with this bitumen, fastest of cements? But, in the midst of this chuckle of self-gratulation, some figure goes by which Thersites too can

love and admire. This is he that should marshal us the way we were going. There is no end to his aid. Without Plato we should almost lose our faith in the possibility of a reasonable book.[1] We seem to want but one, but we want one. We love to associate with heroic persons, since our receptivity is unlimited; and, with the great, our thoughts and manners easily become great. We are all wise in capacity, though so few in energy. There needs but one wise man in a company and all are wise, so rapid is the contagion.

Great men are thus a collyrium to clear our eyes from egotism and enable us to see other people and their works.[2] But there are vices and follies incident to whole populations and ages. Men resemble their contemporaries even more than their progenitors. It is observed in old couples, or in persons who have been housemates for a course of years, that they grow like, and if they should live long enough we should not be able to know them apart. Nature abhors these complaisances which threaten to melt the world into a lump, and hastens to break up such maudlin agglutinations. The like assimilation goes on between men of one town, of one sect, of one political party; and the ideas of the

time are in the air, and infect all who breathe it. Viewed from any high point, this city of New York, yonder city of London, the Western civilization, would seem a bundle of insanities. We keep each other in countenance and exasperate by emulation the frenzy of the time. The shield against the stingings of conscience is the universal practice, or our contemporaries. Again, it is very easy to be as wise and good as your companions. We learn of our contemporaries what they know without effort, and almost through the pores of the skin. We catch it by sympathy, or as a wife arrives at the intellectual and moral elevations of her husband. But we stop where they stop. Very hardly can we take another step. The great, or such as hold of nature and transcend fashions by their fidelity to universal ideas, are saviors from these federal errors, and defend us from our contemporaries. They are the exceptions which we want, where all grows like. A foreign greatness is the antidote for cabalism.

Thus we feed on genius, and refresh ourselves from too much conversation with our mates, and exult in the depth of nature in that direction in which he leads us. What indemnification is one great man for populations of pigmies!

Every mother wishes one son a genius, though all the rest should be mediocre. But a new danger appears in the excess of influence of the great man. His attractions warp us from our place. We have become underlings and intellectual suicides. Ah! yonder in the horizon is our help; — other great men, new qualities, counterweights and checks on each other. We cloy of the honey of each peculiar greatness. Every hero becomes a bore at last. Perhaps Voltaire was not bad-hearted, yet he said of the good Jesus, even, "I pray you, let me never hear that man's name again."[1] They cry up the virtues of George Washington, — "Damn George Washington!" is the poor Jacobin's whole speech and confutation. But it is human nature's indispensable defence. The centripetence augments the centrifugence.[2] We balance one man with his opposite, and the health of the state depends on the see-saw.

There is however a speedy limit to the use of heroes. Every genius is defended from approach by quantities of unavailableness. They are very attractive, and seem at a distance our own: but we are hindered on all sides from approach. The more we are drawn, the more we are repelled. There is something not solid in

the good that is done for us. The best discovery the discoverer makes for himself. It has something unreal for his companion until he too has substantiated it. It seems as if the Deity dressed each soul which he sends into nature in certain virtues and powers not communicable to other men, and sending it to perform one more turn through the circle of beings,' wrote, "*Not transferable*" and "*Good for this trip only*," on these garments of the soul. There is somewhat deceptive about the intercourse of minds. The boundaries are invisible, but they are never crossed. There is such good will to impart, and such good will to receive, that each threatens to become the other; but the law of individuality collects its secret strength: you are you, and I am I, and so we remain.

For nature wishes every thing to remain itself; and whilst every individual strives to grow and exclude and to exclude and grow, to the extremities of the universe, and to impose the law of its being on every other creature, Nature steadily aims to protect each against every other. Each is self-defended. Nothing is more marked than the power by which individuals are guarded from individuals, in a world where every benefactor becomes so easily a malefactor only by

continuation of his activity into places where it is not due; where children seem so much at the mercy of their foolish parents, and where almost all men are too social and interfering. We rightly speak of the guardian angels of children. How superior in their security from infusions of evil persons, from vulgarity and second thought! They shed their own abundant beauty on the objects they behold. Therefore they are not at the mercy of such poor educators as we adults. If we huff and chide them they soon come not to mind it and get a self-reliance; and if we indulge them to folly, they learn the limitation elsewhere.

We need not fear excessive influence. A more generous trust is permitted. Serve the great. Stick at no humiliation. Grudge no office thou canst render. Be the limb of their body, the breath of their mouth. Compromise thy egotism. Who cares for that, so thou gain aught wider and nobler? Never mind the taunt of Boswellism: the devotion may easily be greater than the wretched pride which is guarding its own skirts. Be another: not thyself, but a Platonist; not a soul, but a Christian; not a naturalist, but a Cartesian; not a poet, but a Shaksperian. In vain, the wheels of ter

dency will not stop, nor will all the forces of inertia, fear, or of love itself hold thee there. On, and forever onward!' The microscope observes a monad or wheel-insect among the infusories circulating in water. Presently a dot appears on the animal, which enlarges to a slit, and it becomes two perfect animals. The ever-proceeding detachment appears not less in all thought and in society. Children think they cannot live without their parents. But, long before they are aware of it, the black dot has appeared and the detachment taken place. Any accident will now reveal to them their independence.

But *great men:* — the word is injurious. Is there caste? is there fate? What becomes of the promise to virtue? The thoughtful youth laments the superfœtation of nature. 'Generous and handsome,' he says, 'is your hero; but look at yonder poor Paddy, whose country is his wheelbarrow; look at his whole nation of Paddies.' Why are the masses, from the dawn of history down, food for knives and powder? The idea dignifies a few leaders, who have sentiment, opinion, love, self-devotion; and they make war and death sacred; — but what for the

wretches whom they hire and kill? The cheapness of man is every day's tragedy. It is as real a loss that others should be low as that we should be low; for we must have society.

Is it a reply to these suggestions to say, Society is a Pestalozzian school: all are teachers and pupils in turn? We are equally served by receiving and by imparting. Men who know the same things are not long the best company for each other. But bring to each an intelligent person of another experience, and it is as if you let off water from a lake by cutting a lower basin. It seems a mechanical advantage, and great benefit it is to each speaker, as he can now paint out his thought to himself. We pass very fast, in our personal moods, from dignity to dependence. And if any appear never to assume the chair, but always to stand and serve, it is because we do not see the company in a sufficiently long period for the whole rotation of parts to come about. As to what we call the masses, and common men, — there are no common men. All men are at last of a size; and true art is only possible on the conviction that every talent has its apotheosis somewhere. Fair play and an open field and freshest laurels to all who have won them! But heaven reserves an equal

scope for every creature. Each is uneasy until he has produced his private ray unto the concave sphere and beheld his talent also in its last nobility and exaltation.

The heroes of the hour are relatively great; of a faster growth; or they are such in whom, at the moment of success, a quality is ripe which is then in request. Other days will demand other qualities. Some rays escape the common observer, and want a finely adapted eye. Ask the great man if there be none greater. His companions are; and not the less great but the more that society cannot see them. Nature never sends a great man into the planet without confiding the secret to another soul.

One gracious fact emerges from these studies, — that there is true ascension in our love. The reputations of the nineteenth century will one day be quoted to prove its barbarism. The genius of humanity is the real subject whose biography is written in our annals. We must infer much, and supply many chasms in the record. The history of the universe is symptomatic, and life is mnemonical. No man, in all the procession of famous men, is reason or illumination or that essence we were looking for; but is an exhibition, in some quarter, of new

possibilities. Could we one day complete the immense figure which these flagrant points compose![1] The study of many individuals leads us to an elemental region wherein the individual is lost, or wherein all touch by their summits. Thought and feeling that break out there cannot be impounded by any fence of personality. This is the key to the power of the greatest men, — their spirit diffuses itself. A new quality of mind travels by night and by day, in concentric circles from its origin, and publishes itself by unknown methods: the union of all minds appears intimate; what gets admission to one, cannot be kept out of any other; the smallest acquisition of truth or of energy, in any quarter, is so much good to the commonwealth of souls. If the disparities of talent and position vanish when the individuals are seen in the duration which is necessary to complete the career of each,[2] even more swiftly the seeming injustice disappears when we ascend to the central identity of all the individuals, and know that they are made of the substance which ordaineth and doeth.

The genius of humanity is the right point of view of history. The qualities abide; the men who exhibit them have now more, now less, and

pass away; the qualities remain on another brow. No experience is more familiar. Once you saw phœnixes: they are gone; the world is not therefore disenchanted. The vessels on which you read sacred emblems turn out to be common pottery; but the sense of the pictures is sacred, and you may still read them transferred to the walls of the world.[1] For a time our teachers serve us personally, as metres or milestones of progress. Once they were angels of knowledge and their figures touched the sky. Then we drew near, saw their means, culture and limits; and they yielded their place to other geniuses. Happy, if a few names remain so high that we have not been able to read them nearer, and age and comparison have not robbed them of a ray. But at last we shall cease to look in men for completeness, and shall content ourselves with their social and delegated quality. All that respects the individual is temporary and prospective, like the individual himself, who is ascending out of his limits into a catholic existence. We have never come at the true and best benefit of any genius so long as we believe him an original force. In the moment when he ceases to help us as a cause, he begins to help us more as an effect. Then he appears as an

exponent of a vaster mind and will. The opaque self becomes transparent with the light of the First Cause.

Yet, within the limits of human education and agency, we may say great men exist that there may be greater men. The destiny of organized nature is amelioration, and who can tell its limits? It is for man to tame the chaos; on every side, whilst he lives, to scatter the seeds of science and of song, that climate, corn, animals, men, may be milder, and the germs of love and benefit may be multiplied.[1]

II

PLATO; OR, THE PHILOSOPHER

PLATO; OR, THE PHILOSOPHER

AMONG secular books, Plato only is entitled to Omar's fanatical compliment to the Koran, when he said, "Burn the libraries; for their value is in this book."[1] These sentences contain the culture of nations; these are the corner-stone of schools; these are the fountain-head of literatures.[2] A discipline it is in logic, arithmetic, taste, symmetry, poetry, language, rhetoric, ontology, morals or practical wisdom. There was never such range of speculation. Out of Plato come all things that are still written and debated among men of thought. Great havoc makes he among our originalities. We have reached the mountain from which all these drift boulders were detached.[3] The Bible of the learned for twenty-two hundred years, every brisk young man who says in succession fine things to each reluctant generation,— Boethius, Rabelais, Erasmus, Bruno, Locke, Rousseau, Alfieri, Coleridge, — is some reader of Plato, translating into the vernacular, wittily, his good things. Even the men of grander pro-

portion suffer some deduction from the misfortune (shall I say?) of coming after this exhausting generalizer. St. Augustine, Copernicus, Newton, Behmen, Swedenborg, Goethe, are likewise his debtors and must say after him. For it is fair to credit the broadest generalizer with all the particulars deducible from his thesis.

Plato is philosophy, and philosophy, Plato, — at once the glory and the shame of mankind, since neither Saxon nor Roman have availed to add any idea to his categories. No wife, no children had he, and the thinkers of all civilized nations are his posterity and are tinged with his mind. How many great men Nature is incessantly sending up out of night, to be *his men*, — Platonists! the Alexandrians, a constellation of genius; the Elizabethans, not less; Sir Thomas More, Henry More, John Hales, John Smith, Lord Bacon, Jeremy Taylor, Ralph Cudworth, Sydenham, Thomas Taylor; Marcilius Ficinus and Picus Mirandola. Calvinism is in his Phædo: Christianity is in it. Mahometanism draws all its philosophy, in its hand-book of morals, the Akhlak-y-Jalaly,[1] from him. Mysticism finds in Plato all its texts. This citizen of a town in Greece is no villager nor patriot. An Englishman reads and says, 'how English!'

a German, — 'how Teutonic!' an Italian, — 'how Roman and how Greek!' As they say that Helen of Argos had that universal beauty that every body felt related to her, so Plato seems to a reader in New England an American genius. His broad humanity transcends all sectional lines.

This range of Plato instructs us what to think of the vexed question concerning his reputed works, — what are genuine, what spurious. It is singular that wherever we find a man higher by a whole head than any of his contemporaries, it is sure to come into doubt what are his real works. Thus Homer, Plato, Raffaelle, Shakspeare. For these men magnetize their contemporaries, so that their companions can do for them what they can never do for themselves; and the great man does thus live in several bodies, and write, or paint or act, by many hands; and after some time it is not easy to say what is the authentic work of the master and what is only of his school.

Plato, too, like every great man, consumed his own times. What is a great man but one of great affinities, who takes up into himself all arts, sciences, all knowables, as his food? He can spare nothing; he can dispose of every thing.

What is not good for virtue, is good for knowledge. Hence his contemporaries tax him with plagiarism. But the inventor only knows how to borrow; and society is glad to forget the innumerable laborers who ministered to this architect, and reserves all its gratitude for him. When we are praising Plato, it seems we are praising quotations from Solon and Sophron and Philolaus. Be it so. Every book is a quotation; and every house is a quotation out of all forests and mines and stone quarries; and every man is a quotation from all his ancestors.[1] And this grasping inventor puts all nations under contribution.

Plato absorbed the learning of his times, — Philolaus, Timæus, Heraclitus, Parmenides, and what else; then his master, Socrates; and finding himself still capable of a larger synthesis, — beyond all example then or since, — he travelled into Italy, to gain what Pythagoras had for him; then into Egypt, and perhaps still farther East, to import the other element, which Europe wanted, into the European mind. This breadth entitles him to stand as the representative of philosophy. He says, in the Republic, "Such a genius as philosophers must of necessity have, is wont but seldom in all its pa

meet in one man, but its different parts generally spring up in different persons." Every man who would do anything well, must come to it from a higher ground. A philosopher must be more than a philosopher. Plato is clothed with the powers of a poet, stands upon the highest place of the poet, and (though I doubt he wanted the decisive gift of lyric expression), mainly is not a poet because he chose to use the poetic gift to an ulterior purpose.[1]

Great geniuses have the shortest biographies. Their cousins can tell you nothing about them. They lived in their writings, and so their house and street life was trivial and commonplace. If you would know their tastes and complexions, the most admiring of their readers most resembles them. Plato especially has no external biography. If he had lover, wife, or children, we hear nothing of them. He ground them all into paint.[2] As a good chimney burns its smoke, so a philosopher converts the value of all his fortunes into his intellectual performances.

He was born 427 A. C., about the time of the death of Pericles; was of patrician connection in his times and city, and is said to have had an early inclination for war, but, in his twentieth year, meeting with Socrates, was easily dissuaded

from this pursuit and remained for ten years his scholar, until the death of Socrates. He then went to Megara, accepted the invitations of Dion and of Dionysius to the court of Sicily, and went thither three times, though very capriciously treated. He travelled into Italy; then into Egypt, where he stayed a long time; some say three, — some say thirteen years. It is said he went farther, into Babylonia: this is uncertain. Returning to Athens, he gave lessons in the Academy to those whom his fame drew thither; and died, as we have received it, in the act of writing, at eighty-one years.

But the biography of Plato is interior. We are to account for the supreme elevation of this man in the intellectual history of our race, — how it happens that in proportion to the culture of men they become his scholars; that, as our Jewish Bible has implanted itself in the table-talk and household life of every man and woman in the European and American nations, so the writings of Plato have preoccupied every school of learning, every lover of thought, every church, every poet, — making it impossible to think, on certain levels, except through him. He stands between the truth and every man's mind, and has almost impressed language and the primary

forms of thought with his name and seal. I am struck, in reading him, with the extreme modernness of his style and spirit. Here is the germ of that Europe we know so well, in its long history of arts and arms; here are all its traits, already discernible in the mind of Plato, — and in none before him. It has spread itself since into a hundred histories, but has added no new element. This perpetual modernness is the measure of merit in every work of art; since the author of it was not misled by any thing short-lived or local, but abode by real and abiding traits. How Plato came thus to be Europe, and philosophy, and almost literature, is the problem for us to solve.

This could not have happened without a sound, sincere and catholic man, able to honor, at the same time, the ideal, or laws of the mind, and fate, or the order of nature. The first period of a nation, as of an individual, is the period of unconscious strength. Children cry, scream and stamp with fury, unable to express their desires. As soon as they can speak and tell their want and the reason of it, they become gentle. In adult life, whilst the perceptions are obtuse, men and women talk vehemently and superlatively, blunder and quarrel: their manners are full of des-

peration; their speech is full of oaths. As soon as, with culture, things have cleared up a little, and they see them no longer in lumps and masses but accurately distributed, they desist from that weak vehemence and explain their meaning in detail. If the tongue had not been framed for articulation, man would still be a beast in the forest. The same weakness and want, on a higher plane, occurs daily in the education of ardent young men and women. 'Ah! you don't understand me; I have never met with any one who comprehends me:' and they sigh and weep, write verses and walk alone, — fault of power to express their precise meaning. In a month or two, through the favor of their good genius, they meet some one so related as to assist their volcanic estate, and, good communication being once established, they are thenceforward good citizens. It is ever thus. The progress is to accuracy, to skill, to truth, from blind force.

There is a moment in the history of every nation, when, proceeding out of this brute youth, the perceptive powers reach their ripeness and have not yet become microscopic: so that man, at that instant, extends across the entire scale, and, with his feet still planted on the immense

forces of night, converses by his eyes and brain with solar and stellar creation. That is the moment of adult health, the culmination of power.[1]

Such is the history of Europe, in all points; and such in philosophy. Its early records, almost perished, are of the immigrations from Asia, bringing with them the dreams of barbarians; a confusion of crude notions of morals and of natural philosophy, gradually subsiding through the partial insight of single teachers.

Before Pericles came the Seven Wise Masters, and we have the beginnings of geometry, metaphysics and ethics: then the partialists, — deducing the origin of things from flux or water, or from air, or from fire, or from mind. All mix with these causes mythologic pictures. At last comes Plato, the distributor, who needs no barbaric paint, or tattoo, or whooping; for he can define. He leaves with Asia the vast and superlative; he is the arrival of accuracy and intelligence. "He shall be as a god to me, who can rightly divide and define."

This defining is philosophy. Philosophy is the account which the human mind gives to itself of the constitution of the world. Two cardinal facts lie forever at the base; the one, and the two. — 1. Unity, or Identity; and, 2. Va-

riety.[1] We unite all things by perceiving the law which pervades them; by perceiving the superficial differences and the profound resemblances. But every mental act, — this very perception of identity or oneness, recognizes the difference of things. Oneness and otherness. It is impossible to speak or to think without embracing both.

The mind is urged to ask for one cause of many effects; then for the cause of that; and again the cause, diving still into the profound: self-assured that it shall arrive at an absolute and sufficient one, — a one that shall be all. "In the midst of the sun is the light, in the midst of the light is truth, and in the midst of truth is the imperishable being," say the Vedas. All philosophy, of East and West, has the same centripetence. Urged by an opposite necessity, the mind returns from the one to that which is not one, but other or many; from cause to effect; and affirms the necessary existence of variety, the self-existence of both, as each is involved in the other. These strictly-blended elements it is the problem of thought to separate and to reconcile. Their existence is mutually contradictory and exclusive; and each so fast slides into the other that we can never say

what is one, and what it is not. The Proteus is as nimble in the highest as in the lowest grounds; when we contemplate the one, the true, the good, — as in the surfaces and extremities of matter.

In all nations there are minds which incline to dwell in the conception of the fundamental Unity. The raptures of prayer and ecstasy of devotion lose all being in one Being. This tendency finds its highest expression in the religious writings of the East, and chiefly in the Indian Scriptures, in the Vedas, the Bhagavat Geeta, and the Vishnu Purana.[1] Those writings contain little else than this idea, and they rise to pure and sublime strains in celebrating it.

The Same, the Same: friend and foe are of one stuff; the ploughman, the plough and the furrow are of one stuff; and the stuff is such and so much that the variations of form are unimportant.[2] "You are fit" (says the supreme Krishna to a sage) "to apprehend that you are not distinct from me. That which I am, thou art, and that also is this world, with its gods and heroes and mankind. Men contemplate distinctions, because they are stupefied with ignorance." "The words *I* and *mine* consti-

tute ignorance. What is the great end of all, you shall now learn from me. It is soul,—one in all bodies, pervading, uniform, perfect, pre-eminent over nature, exempt from birth, growth and decay, omnipresent, made up of true knowledge, independent, unconnected with unrealities, with name, species and the rest, in time past, present and to come. The knowledge that this spirit, which is essentially one, is in one's own and in all other bodies, is the wisdom of one who knows the unity of things. As one diffusive air, passing through the perforations of a flute, is distinguished as the notes of a scale, so the nature of the Great Spirit is single, though its forms be manifold, arising from the consequences of acts.[1] When the difference of the investing form, as that of god or the rest, is destroyed, there is no distinction." "The whole world is but a manifestation of Vishnu, who is identical with all things, and is to be regarded by the wise as not differing from, but as the same as themselves. I neither am going nor coming; nor is my dwelling in any one place; nor art thou, thou; nor are others, others; nor am I, I." As if he had said, 'All is for the soul, and the soul is Vishnu; and animals and stars are transient paintings; and

light is whitewash; and durations are deceptive; and form is imprisonment; and heaven itself a decoy.' [1] That which the soul seeks is resolution into being above form, out of Tartarus and out of heaven, — liberation fron nature.

If speculation tends thus to a terrific unity, in which all things are absorbed, action tends directly backwards to diversity. The first is the course or gravitation of mind; the second is the power of nature. Nature is the manifold. The unity absorbs, and melts or reduces. Nature opens and creates. These two principles reappear and interpenetrate all things, all thought; the one, the many. One is being; the other, intellect: one is necessity; the other, freedom: one, rest; the other, motion: one, power; the other, distribution: one, strength; the other, pleasure: one, consciousness; the other, definition: one, genius; the other, talent: one, earnestness; the other, knowledge: one, possession; the other, trade: one, caste; the other, culture: one, king; the other, democracy: and, if we dare carry these generalizations a step higher, and name the last tendency of both, we might say, that the end of the one is escape from organization, — pure science; and

the end of the other is the highest instrumentality, or use of means, or executive deity.

Each student adheres, by temperament and by habit, to the first or to the second of these gods of the mind. By religion, he tends to unity; by intellect, or by the senses, to the many. A too rapid unification, and an excessive appliance to parts and particulars, are the twin dangers of speculation.

To this partiality the history of nations corresponded. The country of unity, of immovable institutions, the seat of a philosophy delighting in abstractions, of men faithful in doctrine and in practice to the idea of a deaf, unimplorable, immense fate, is Asia; and it realizes this faith in the social institution of caste. On the other side, the genius of Europe is active and creative: it resists caste by culture; its philosophy was a discipline; it is a land of arts, inventions, trade, freedom. If the East loved infinity, the West delighted in boundaries.

European civility is the triumph of talent, the extension of system, the sharpened understanding, adaptive skill, delight in forms, delight in manifestation, in comprehensible results. Pericles, Athens, Greece, had been working in this element with the joy of genius not yet chilled

by any foresight of the detriment of an excess. They saw before them no sinister political economy; no ominous Malthus; no Paris or London; no pitiless subdivision of classes, — the doom of the pin-makers, the doom of the weavers, of dressers, of stockingers, of carders, of spinners, of colliers; no Ireland; no Indian caste, superinduced by the efforts of Europe to throw it off. The understanding was in its health and prime. Art was in its splendid novelty. They cut the Pentelican marble as if it were snow, and their perfect works in architecture and sculpture seemed things of course, not more difficult than the completion of a new ship at the Medford yards, or new mills at Lowell. These things are in course, and may be taken for granted. The Roman legion, Byzantine legislation, English trade, the saloons of Versailles, the cafés of Paris, the steam-mill, steamboat, steam-coach, may all be seen in perspective; the town-meeting, the ballot-box, the newspaper and cheap press.

Meantime, Plato, in Egypt and in Eastern pilgrimages, imbibed the idea of one Deity, in which all things are absorbed. The unity of Asia and the detail of Europe; the infinitude of the Asiatic soul and the defining, result-lov-

ing, machine-making, surface-seeking, opera-going Europe, — Plato came to join, and, by contact, to enhance the energy of each. The excellence of Europe and Asia are in his brain. Metaphysics and natural philosophy expressed the genius of Europe; he substructs the religion of Asia, as the base.

In short, a balanced soul was born, perceptive of the two elements.[1] It is as easy to be great as to be small. The reason why we do not at once believe in admirable souls is because they are not in our experience. In actual life, they are so rare as to be incredible; but primarily there is not only no presumption against them, but the strongest presumption in favor of their appearance. But whether voices were heard in the sky, or not; whether his mother or his father dreamed that the infant man-child was the son of Apollo; whether a swarm of bees settled on his lips, or not; — a man who could see two sides of a thing was born. The wonderful synthesis so familiar in nature; the upper and the under side of the medal of Jove; the union of impossibilities, which reappears in every object; its real and its ideal power, — was now also transferred entire to the consciousness of a man.

The balanced soul came. If he loved abstract truth, he saved himself by propounding the most popular of all principles, the absolute good, which rules rulers, and judges the judge. If he made transcendental distinctions, he fortified himself by drawing all his illustrations from sources disdained by orators and polite conversers; from mares and puppies; from pitchers and soup-ladles; from cooks and criers; the shops of potters, horse-doctors, butchers and fishmongers. He cannot forgive in himself a partiality, but is resolved that the two poles of thought shall appear in his statement. His argument and his sentence are self-poised and spherical. The two poles appear; yes, and become two hands, to grasp and appropriate their own.

Every great artist has been such by synthesis. Our strength is transitional, alternating; or, shall I say, a thread of two strands. The sea-shore, sea seen from shore, shore seen from sea; the taste of two metals in contact; and our enlarged powers at the approach and at the departure of a friend; the experience of poetic creativeness, which is not found in staying at home, nor yet in travelling, but in transitions from one to the other, which must therefore be adroitly managed to present as much transitional surface as pos-

sible; this command of two elements must explain the power and the charm of Plato. Art expresses the one or the same by the different. Thought seeks to know unity in unity; poetry to show it by variety; that is, always by an object or symbol. Plato keeps the two vases, one of æther and one of pigment, at his side, and invariably uses both. Things added to things, as statistics, civil history, are inventories. Things used as language are inexhaustibly attractive. Plato turns incessantly the obverse and the reverse of the medal of Jove.

To take an example: — The physical philosophers had sketched each his theory of the world; the theory of atoms, of fire, of flux, of spirit; theories mechanical and chemical in their genius. Plato, a master of mathematics, studious of all natural laws and causes, feels these, as second causes, to be no theories of the world but bare inventories and lists. To the study of nature he therefore prefixes the dogma, — "Let us declare the cause which led the Supreme Ordainer to produce and compose the universe. He was good; and he who is good has no kind of envy. Exempt from envy, he wished that all things should be as much as possible like himself. Whosoever, taught by wise men, shall admit

this as the prime cause of the origin and foundation of the world, will be in the truth." [1] "All things are for the sake of the good, and it is the cause of every thing beautiful." This dogma animates and impersonates his philosophy.

The synthesis which makes the character of his mind appears in all his talents. Where there is great compass of wit, we usually find excellencies that combine easily in the living man, but in description appear incompatible. The mind of Plato is not to be exhibited by a Chinese catalogue, but is to be apprehended by an original mind in the exercise of its original power. In him the freest abandonment is united with the precision of a geometer. His daring imagination gives him the more solid grasp of facts; as the birds of highest flight have the strongest alar bones. His patrician polish, his intrinsic elegance, edged by an irony so subtle that it stings and paralyzes, adorn the soundest health and strength of frame. According to the old sentence, "If Jove should descend to the earth, he would speak in the style of Plato."

With this palatial air there is, for the direct aim of several of his works and running through the tenor of them all, a certain earnestness, which mounts, in the Republic and in the Phædo, to

piety. He has been charged with feigning sickness at the time of the death of Socrates. But the anecdotes that have come down from the times attest his manly interference before the people in his master's behalf, since even the savage cry of the assembly to Plato is preserved; and the indignation towards popular government, in many of his pieces, expresses a personal exasperation. He has a probity, a native reverence for justice and honor, and a humanity which makes him tender for the superstitions of the people. Add to this, he believes that poetry, prophecy and the high insight are from a wisdom of which man is not master; that the gods never philosophize, but by a celestial mania these miracles are accomplished.[1] Horsed on these winged steeds, he sweeps the dim regions, visits worlds which flesh cannot enter; he saw the souls in pain, he hears the doom of the judge, he beholds the penal metempsychosis, the Fates, with the rock and shears, and hears the intoxicating hum of their spindle.

But his circumspection never forsook him. One would say he had read the inscription on the gates of Busyrane, — "Be bold;" and on the second gate, — "Be bold, be bold, and evermore be bold;"[2] and then again had paused

well at the third gate, — "Be not too bold." His strength is like the momentum of a falling planet, and his discretion the return of its due and perfect curve, — so excellent is his Greek love of boundary and his skill in definition. In reading logarithms one is not more secure than in following Plato in his flights. Nothing can be colder than his head, when the lightnings of his imagination are playing in the sky. He has finished his thinking before he brings it to the reader, and he abounds in the surprises of a literary master. He has that opulence which furnishes, at every turn, the precise weapon he needs. As the rich man wears no more garments, drives no more horses, sits in no more chambers than the poor, — but has that one dress, or equipage, or instrument, which is fit for the hour and the need; so Plato, in his plenty, is never restricted, but has the fit word. There is indeed no weapon in all the armory of wit which he did not possess and use, — epic, analysis, mania, intuition, music, satire and irony, down to the customary and polite. His illustrations are poetry and his jests illustrations Socrates' profession of obstetric art is good philosophy; [1] and his finding that word "cookery," and "adulatory art," for rhetoric, in the Gorgias,

does us a substantial service still. No orator can measure in effect with him who can give good nicknames.

What moderation and understatement and checking his thunder in mid volley! He has good-naturedly furnished the courtier and citizen with all that can be said against the schools. "For philosophy is an elegant thing, if any one modestly meddles with it; but if he is conversant with it more than is becoming, it corrupts the man." He could well afford to be generous, — he, who from the sunlike centrality and reach of his vision, had a faith without cloud. Such as his perception, was his speech: he plays with the doubt and makes the most of it: he paints and quibbles; and by and by comes a sentence that moves the sea and land. The admirable earnest comes not only at intervals, in the perfect yes and no of the dialogue, but in bursts of light. "I, therefore, Callicles, am persuaded by these accounts, and consider how I may exhibit my soul before the judge in a healthy condition. Wherefore, disregarding the honors that most men value, and looking to the truth, I shall endeavor in reality to live as virtuously as I can; and when I die, to die so. And I invite all other men, to the utmost

of my power; and you too I in turn invite to this contest, which, I affirm, surpasses all contests here." [1]

He is a great average man; one who, to the best thinking, adds a proportion and equality in his faculties, so that men see in him their own dreams and glimpses made available and made to pass for what they are. A great common-sense is his warrant and qualification to be the world's interpreter. He has reason, as all the philosophic and poetic class have: but he has also what they have not,—this strong solving sense to reconcile his poetry with the appearances of the world, and build a bridge from the streets of cities to the Atlantis. He omits never this graduation, but slopes his thought, however picturesque the precipice on one side, to an access from the plain. He never writes in ecstasy, or catches us up into poetic raptures.

Plato apprehended the cardinal facts. He could prostrate himself on the earth and cover his eyes whilst he adored that which cannot be numbered, or gauged, or known, or named: that of which every thing can be affirmed and denied: that "which is entity and nonentity." [2] He called it super-essential. He even stood

ready, as in the Parmenides, to demonstrate that it was so, — that this Being exceeded the limits of intellect. No man ever more fully acknowledged the Ineffable.[1] Having paid his homage, as for the human race, to the Illimitable, he then stood erect, and for the human race affirmed, 'And yet things are knowable!' — that is, the Asia in his mind was first heartily honored, — the ocean of love and power, before form, before will, before knowledge, the Same, the Good, the One; and now, refreshed and empowered by this worship, the instinct of Europe, namely, culture, returns; and he cries, 'Yet things are knowable!' They are knowable, because being from one, things correspond. There is a scale; and the correspondence of heaven to earth, of matter to mind, of the part to the whole, is our guide. As there is a science of stars, called astronomy; a science of quantities, called mathematics; a science of qualities, called chemistry; so there is a science of sciences, — I call it Dialectic, — which is the Intellect discriminating the false and the true. It rests on the observation of identity and diversity; for to judge is to unite to an object the notion which belongs to it. The sciences, even the best, — mathematics and astronomy,

—are like sportsmen, who seize whatever prey offers, even without being able to make any use of it. Dialectic must teach the use of them. "This is of that rank that no intellectual man will enter on any study for its own sake, but only with a view to advance himself in that one sole science which embraces all."[1]

"The essence or peculiarity of man is to comprehend a whole; or that which in the diversity of sensations can be comprised under a rational unity." "The soul which has never perceived the truth, cannot pass into the human form."[2] I announce to men the Intellect. I announce the good of being interpenetrated by the mind that made nature: this benefit, namely, that it can understand nature, which it made and maketh. Nature is good, but intellect is better: as the law-giver is before the law-receiver. I give you joy, O sons of men! that truth is altogether wholesome; that we have hope to search out what might be the very self of everything. The misery of man is to be baulked of the sight of essence and to be stuffed with conjectures; but the supreme good is reality; the supreme beauty is reality; and all virtue and all felicity depend on this science of the real: for courage is nothing else than know

ledge; the fairest fortune that can befall man is to be guided by his dæmon to that which is truly his own. This also is the essence of justice, — to attend every one his own: nay, the notion of virtue is not to be arrived at except through direct contemplation of the divine essence. Courage then! for "the persuasion that we must search that which we do not know, will render us, beyond comparison, better, braver and more industrious than if we thought it impossible to discover what we do not know, and useless to search for it." He secures a position not to be commanded, by his passion for reality; valuing philosophy only as it is the pleasure of conversing with real being.

Thus, full of the genius of Europe, he said, *Culture*. He saw the institutions of Sparta and recognized, more genially one would say than any since, the hope of education. He delighted in every accomplishment, in every graceful and useful and truthful performance; above all in the splendors of genius and intellectual achievement. "The whole of life, O Socrates," said Glauco, "is, with the wise, the measure of hearing such discourses as these." What a price he sets on the feats of talent, on the powers of Pericles, of Isocrates, of Parmenides! What

price above price on the talents themselves! He called the several faculties, gods, in his beautiful personation. What value he gives to the art of gymnastic in education; what to geometry;[1] what to music; what to astronomy, whose appeasing and medicinal power he celebrates! In the Timæus he indicates the highest employment of the eyes. "By us it is asserted that God invented and bestowed sight on us for this purpose, — that on surveying the circles of intelligence in the heavens, we might properly employ those of our own minds, which, though disturbed when compared with the others that are uniform, are still allied to their circulations; and that having thus learned, and being naturally possessed of a correct reasoning faculty, we might, by imitating the uniform revolutions of divinity, set right our own wanderings and blunders." And in the Republic, — "By each of these disciplines a certain organ of the soul is both purified and reanimated which is blinded and buried by studies of another kind; an organ better worth saving than ten thousand eyes, since truth is perceived by this alone."

He said, Culture; but he first admitted its basis, and gave immeasurably the first place to advantages of nature. His patrician tastes laid

stress on the distinctions of birth. In the doctrine of the organic character and disposition is the origin of caste. "Such as were fit to govern, into their composition the informing Deity mingled gold; into the military, silver; iron and brass for husbandmen and artificers." The East confirms itself, in all ages, in this faith. The Koran is explicit on this point of caste. "Men have their metal, as of gold and silver. Those of you who were the worthy ones in the state of ignorance, will be the worthy ones in the state of faith, as soon as you embrace it." Plato was not less firm. "Of the five orders of things, only four can be taught to the generality of men." In the Republic he insists on the temperaments of the youth,[1] as first of the first.

A happier example of the stress laid on nature is in the dialogue with the young Theages, who wishes to receive lessons from Socrates. Socrates declares that if some have grown wise by associating with him, no thanks are due to him; but, simply, whilst they were with him they grew wise, not because of him; he pretends not to know the way of it. "It is adverse to many, nor can those be benefited by associating with me whom the Dæmon opposes; so

that it is not possible for me to live with these. With many however he does not prevent me from conversing, who yet are not at all benefited by associating with me. Such, O Theages, is the association with me; for, if it pleases the God, you will make great and rapid proficiency: you will not, if he does not please. Judge whether it is not safer to be instructed by some one of those who have power over the benefit which they impart to men, than by me, who benefit or not, just as it may happen." As if he had said, 'I have no system. I cannot be answerable for you. You will be what you must. If there is love between us, inconceivably delicious and profitable will our intercourse be; if not, your time is lost and you will only annoy me. I shall seem to you stupid, and the reputation I have, false. Quite above us, beyond the will of you or me, is this secret affinity or repulsion laid. All my good is magnetic, and I educate, not by lessons, but by going about my business.'

He said, Culture; he said, Nature; and he failed not to add, 'There is also the divine.' There is no thought in any mind but it quickly tends to convert itself into a power and organizes a huge instrumentality of means. Plato,

lover of limits, loved the illimitable, saw the enlargement and nobility which come from truth itself and good itself, and attempted as if on the part of the human intellect, once for all to do it adequate homage, — homage fit for the immense soul to receive, and yet homage becoming the intellect to render. He said then, 'Our faculties run out into infinity, and return to us thence. We can define but a little way; but here is a fact which will not be skipped, and which to shut our eyes upon is suicide. All things are in a scale; and, begin where we will, ascend and ascend. All things are symbolical;' and what we call results are beginnings.'

A key to the method and completeness of Plato is his twice bisected line. After he has illustrated the relation between the absolute good and true and the forms of the intelligible world, he says: "Let there be a line cut in two unequal parts. Cut again each of these two main parts, — one representing the visible, the other the intelligible world, — and let these two new sections represent the bright part and the dark part of each of these worlds. You will have, for one of the sections of the visible world, images, that is, both shadows and reflections; — for the other section, the objects of these images, that is,

plants, animals, and the works of art and nature. Then divide the intelligible world in like manner; the one section will be of opinions and hypotheses, and the other section of truths." [1] To these four sections, the four operations of the soul correspond, — conjecture, faith, understanding, reason. As every pool reflects the image of the sun, so every thought and thing restores us an image and creature of the supreme Good. The universe is perforated by a million channels for his activity. All things mount and mount.

All his thought has this ascension; in Phædrus, teaching that beauty is the most lovely of all things, exciting hilarity and shedding desire and confidence through the universe wherever it enters, and it enters in some degree into all things: — but that there is another, which is as much more beautiful than beauty as beauty is than chaos; namely, wisdom, which our wonderful organ of sight cannot reach unto, but which, could it be seen, would ravish us with its perfect reality.[2] He has the same regard to it as the source of excellence in works of art. When an artificer, he says, in the fabrication of any work, looks to that which always subsists according *to the same;* and, employing a model of this kind, expresses its idea and power in his work, — it

must follow that his production should be beautiful. But when he beholds that which is born and dies, it will be far from beautiful.

Thus ever: the Banquet is a teaching in the same spirit, familiar now to all the poetry and to all the sermons of the world, that the love of the sexes is initial, and symbolizes at a distance the passion of the soul for that immense lake of beauty it exists to seek.[1] This faith in the Divinity is never out of mind, and constitutes the ground of all his dogmas. Body cannot teach wisdom; — God only. In the same mind he constantly affirms that virtue cannot be taught; that it is not a science, but an inspiration; that the greatest goods are produced to us through mania and are assigned to us by a divine gift.

This leads me to that central figure which he has established in his Academy as the organ through which every considered opinion shall be announced, and whose biography he has likewise so labored that the historic facts are lost in the light of Plato's mind. Socrates and Plato are the double star which the most powerful instruments will not entirely separate. Socrates again, in his traits and genius, is the best example of that synthesis which constitutes Plato's extraordinary power. Socrates, a man of humble stem,

but honest enough; of the commonest history; of a personal homeliness so remarkable as to be a cause of wit in others: — the rather that his broad good nature and exquisite taste for a joke invited the sally, which was sure to be paid. The players personated him on the stage; the potters copied his ugly face on their stone jugs. He was a cool fellow, adding to his humor a perfect temper and a knowledge of his man, be he who he might whom he talked with, which laid the companion open to certain defeat in any debate, — and in debate he immoderately delighted. The young men are prodigiously fond of him and invite him to their feasts, whither he goes for conversation. He can drink, too; has the strongest head in Athens; and after leaving the whole party under the table, goes away as if nothing had happened, to begin new dialogues with somebody that is sober. In short, he was what our country-people call *an old one*.

He affected a good many citizen-like tastes, was monstrously fond of Athens, hated trees, never willingly went beyond the walls, knew the old characters, valued the bores and philistines, thought every thing in Athens a little better than anything in any other place. He was plain as a Quaker in habit and speech, affected low phrases,

and illustrations from cocks and quails, soup-pans and sycamore-spoons, grooms and farriers, and unnamable offices, — especially if he talked with any superfine person. He had a Franklin-like wisdom. Thus he showed one who was afraid to go on foot to Olympia, that it was no more than his daily walk within doors, if continuously extended, would easily reach.

Plain old uncle as he was, with his great ears, an immense talker, — the rumor ran that on one or two occasions, in the war with Bœotia, he had shown a determination which had covered the retreat of a troop; and there was some story that under cover of folly, he had, in the city government, when one day he chanced to hold a seat there, evinced a courage in opposing singly the popular voice, which had well-nigh ruined him. He is very poor; but then he is hardy as a soldier, and can live on a few olives; usually, in the strictest sense, on bread and water, except when entertained by his friends. His necessary expenses were exceedingly small, and no one could live as he did. He wore no under garment; his upper garment was the same for summer and winter, and he went barefooted; and it is said that to procure the pleasure, which he loves, of talking at his ease all day with the most elegant

and cultivated young men, he will now and then return to his shop and carve statues, good or bad, for sale. However that be, it is certain that he had grown to delight in nothing else than this conversation; and that, under his hypocritical pretence of knowing nothing, he attacks and brings down all the fine speakers, all the fine philosophers of Athens, whether natives or strangers from Asia Minor and the islands. Nobody can refuse to talk with him, he is so honest and really curious to know; a man who was willingly confuted if he did not speak the truth, and who willingly confuted others asserting what was false; and not less pleased when confuted than when confuting; for he thought not any evil happened to men of such a magnitude as false opinion respecting the just and unjust. A pitiless disputant, who knows nothing, but the bounds of whose conquering intelligence no man had ever reached; whose temper was imperturbable; whose dreadful logic was always leisurely and sportive; so careless and ignorant as to disarm the wariest and draw them, in the pleasantest manner, into horrible doubts and confusion. But he always knew the way out; knew it, yet would not tell it. No escape; he drives them to terrible choices by his dilemmas, and tosses the Hippiases and Gor-

giases with their grand reputations, as a boy tosses his balls. The tyrannous realist! — Meno has discoursed a thousand times, at length, on virtue, before many companies, and very well, as it appeared to him; but at this moment he cannot even tell what it is, — this cramp-fish of a Socrates has so bewitched him.

This hard-headed humorist, whose strange conceits, drollery and *bonhommie* diverted the young patricians, whilst the rumor of his sayings and quibbles gets abroad every day, — turns out, in the sequel, to have a probity as invincible as his logic, and to be either insane, or at least, under cover of this play, enthusiastic in his religion. When accused before the judges of subverting the popular creed, he affirms the immortality of the soul, the future reward and punishment; and refusing to recant, in a caprice of the popular government was condemned to die, and sent to the prison. Socrates entered the prison and took away all ignominy from the place, which could not be a prison whilst he was there. Crito bribed the jailer; but Socrates would not go out by treachery. "Whatever inconvenience ensue, nothing is to be preferred before justice. These things I hear like pipes and drums, whose sound makes me deaf to every

thing you say." The fame of this prison, the fame of the discourses there and the drinking of the hemlock are one of the most precious passages in the history of the world.

The rare coincidence, in one ugly body, of the droll and the martyr, the keen street and market debater with the sweetest saint known to any history at that time, had forcibly struck the mind of Plato, so capacious of these contrasts; and the figure of Socrates by a necessity placed itself in the foreground of the scene, as the fittest dispenser of the intellectual treasures he had to communicate. It was a rare fortune that this Æsop of the mob and this robed scholar should meet, to make each other immortal in their mutual faculty. The strange synthesis in the character of Socrates capped the synthesis in the mind of Plato. Moreover by this means he was able, in the direct way and without envy to avail himself of the wit and weight of Socrates, to which unquestionably his own debt was great; and these derived again their principal advantage from the perfect art of Plato.

It remains to say that the defect of Plato in power is only that which results inevitably from his quality. He is intellectual in his aim; and therefore, in expression, literary. Mounting into

heaven, diving into the pit, expounding the laws of the state, the passion of love, the remorse of crime, the hope of the parting soul, — he is literary, and never otherwise. It is almost the sole deduction from the merit of Plato that his writings have not, — what is no doubt incident to this regnancy of intellect in his work, — the vital authority which the screams of prophets and the sermons of unlettered Arabs and Jews possess. There is an interval; and to cohesion, contact is necessary.[1]

I know not what can be said in reply to this criticism but that we have come to a fact in the nature of things: an oak is not an orange. The qualities of sugar remain with sugar, and those of salt with salt.

In the second place, he has not a system. The dearest defenders and disciples are at fault. He attempted a theory of the universe, and his theory is not complete or self-evident. One man thinks he means this, and another that; he has said one thing in one place, and the reverse of it in another place. He is charged with having failed to make the transition from ideas to matter. Here is the world, sound as a nut, perfect, not the smallest piece of chaos left, never a stitch nor an end, not a mark of haste,

or botching, or second thought; but the theory of the world is a thing of shreds and patches.

The longest wave is quickly lost in the sea. Plato would willingly have a Platonism, a known and accurate expression for the world, and it should be accurate. It shall be the world passed through the mind of Plato, — nothing less. Every atom shall have the Platonic tinge; every atom, every relation or quality you knew before, you shall know again and find here, but now ordered; not nature, but art. And you shall feel that Alexander indeed overran, with men and horses, some countries of the planet; but countries, and things of which countries are made, elements, planet itself, laws of planet and of men, have passed through this man as bread into his body, and become no longer bread, but body: so all this mammoth morsel has become Plato. He has clapped copyright on the world. This is the ambition of individualism. But the mouthful proves too large. *Boa constrictor* has good will to eat it, but he is foiled. He falls abroad in the attempt; and biting, gets strangled: the bitten world holds the biter fast by his own teeth. There he perishes: unconquered nature lives on and forgets him. So it fares with all: so must it fare with Plato. In view of

eternal nature, Plato turns out to be philosophical exercitations. He argues on this side and on that. The acutest German, the lovingest disciple, could never tell what Platonism was; indeed, admirable texts can be quoted on both sides of every great question from him.'

These things we are forced to say if we must consider the effort of Plato or of any philosopher to dispose of nature, — which will not be disposed of. No power of genius has ever yet had the smallest success in explaining existence. The perfect enigma remains. But there is an injustice in assuming this ambition for Plato. Let us not seem to treat with flippancy his venerable name. Men, in proportion to their intellect, have admitted his transcendent claims. The way to know him is to compare him, not with nature, but with other men. How many ages have gone by, and he remains unapproached! A chief structure of human wit, like Karnac, or the mediæval cathedrals, or the Etrurian remains, it requires all the breath of human faculty to know it. I think it is trueliest seen when seen with the most respect. His sense deepens, his merits multiply, with study. When we say, Here is a fine collection of fables; or when we praise the style, or the common sense,

or arithmetic, we speak as boys, and much of our impatient criticism of the dialectic, I suspect, is no better.

The criticism is like our impatience of miles, when we are in a hurry; but it is still best that a mile should have seventeen hundred and sixty yards. The great-eyed Plato proportioned the lights and shades after the genius of our life.[x]

PLATO: NEW READINGS

The publication, in Mr. Bohn's "Serial Library," of the excellent translations of Plato, which we esteem one of the chief benefits the cheap press has yielded, gives us an occasion to take hastily a few more notes of the elevation and bearings of this fixed star; or to add a bulletin, like the journals, of *Plato at the latest dates*.

Modern science, by the extent of its generalization, has learned to indemnify the student of man for the defects of individuals by tracing growth and ascent in races; and, by the simple expedient of lighting up the vast background, generates a feeling of complacency and hope. The human being has the saurian and the plant in his rear. His arts and sciences, the easy issue of his brain, look glorious when prospectively beheld from the distant brain of ox, crocodile and fish. It seems as if nature, in regarding the geologic night behind her, when, in five or six millenniums, she had turned out five or six men, as Homer, Phidias, Menu and Columbus, was no wise discontented with the result. These

samples attested the virtue of the tree. These were a clear amelioration of trilobite and saurus, and a good basis for further proceeding. With this artist, time and space are cheap, and she is insensible to what you say of tedious preparation. She waited tranquilly the flowing periods of paleontology, for the hour to be struck when man should arrive. Then periods must pass before the motion of the earth can be suspected; then before the map of the instincts and the cultivable powers can be drawn. But as of races, so the succession of individual men is fatal and beautiful, and Plato has the fortune in the history of mankind to mark an epoch.[1]

Plato's fame does not stand on a syllogism, or on any masterpieces of the Socratic reasoning, or on any thesis, as for example the immortality of the soul. He is more than an expert, or a schoolman, or a geometer, or the prophet of a peculiar message. He represents the privilege of the intellect, the power, namely, of carrying up every fact to successive platforms and so disclosing in every fact a germ of expansion. These expansions are in the essence of thought. The naturalist would never help us to them by any discoveries of the extent of the universe, but is as poor when cataloguing the resolved nebula of Orion,

as when measuring the angles of an acre. But the Republic of Plato, by these expansions, may be said to require and so to anticipate the astronomy of Laplace. The expansions are organic. The mind does not create what it perceives, any more than the eye creates the rose. In ascribing to Plato the merit of announcing them, we only say, Here was a more complete man, who could apply to nature the whole scale of the senses, the understanding and the reason. These expansions or extensions consist in continuing the spiritual sight where the horizon falls on our natural vision, and by this second sight discovering the long lines of law which shoot in every direction. Everywhere he stands on a path which has no end, but runs continuously round the universe.' Therefore every word becomes an exponent of nature. Whatever he looks upon discloses a second sense, and ulterior senses. His perception of the generation of contraries, of death out of life and life out of death, — that law by which, in nature, decomposition is recomposition, and putrefaction and cholera are only signals of a new creation; his discernment of the little in the large and the large in the small; studying the state in the citizen and the citizen in the state; and leaving it doubtful whether he exhibited the Repub-

lic as an allegory on the education of the private soul; his beautiful definitions of ideas, of time, of form, of figure, of the line, sometimes hypothetically given, as his defining of virtue, courage, justice, temperance; his love of the apologue, and his apologues themselves; the cave of Trophonius; the ring of Gyges; the charioteer and two horses; the golden, silver, brass and iron temperaments; Theuth and Thamus; and the visions of Hades and the Fates,[1] — fables which have imprinted themselves in the human memory like the signs of the zodiac; his soliform eye and his boniform soul;[2] his doctrine of assimilation; his doctrine of reminiscence; his clear vision of the laws of return, or reaction, which secure instant justice throughout the universe, instanced everywhere, but specially in the doctrine, "what comes from God to us, returns from us to God," and in Socrates' belief that the laws below are sisters of the laws above.

More striking examples are his moral conclusions. Plato affirms the coincidence of science and virtue; for vice can never know itself and virtue, but virtue knows both itself and vice. The eye attested that justice was best, as long as it was profitable; Plato affirms that it is profitable throughout; that the profit is intrinsic, though

the just conceal his justice from gods and men; that it is better to suffer injustice than to do it; that the sinner ought to covet punishment; that the lie was more hurtful than homicide; and that ignorance, or the involuntary lie, was more calamitous than involuntary homicide; that the soul is unwillingly deprived of true opinions, and that no man sins willingly; that the order or proceeding of nature was from the mind to the body, and, though a sound body cannot restore an unsound mind, yet a good soul can, by its virtue, render the body the best possible. The intelligent have a right over the ignorant, namely, the right of instructing them. The right punishment of one out of tune is to make him play in tune; the fine which the good, refusing to govern, ought to pay, is, to be governed by a worse man; that his guards shall not handle gold and silver, but shall be instructed that there is gold and silver in their souls, which will make men willing to give them every thing which they need.

This second sight explains the stress laid on geometry. He saw that the globe of earth was not more lawful and precise than was the supersensible; that a celestial geometry was in place there, as a logic of lines and angles here below;

that the world was throughout mathematical; the proportions are constant of oxygen, azote and lime; there is just so much water and slate and magnesia; not less are the proportions constant of the moral elements.[1]

This eldest Goethe, hating varnish and falsehood, delighted in revealing the real at the base of the accidental; in discovering connection, continuity and representation everywhere, hating insulation; and appears like the god of wealth among the cabins of vagabonds, opening power and capability in everything he touches. Ethical science was new and vacant when Plato could write thus: — "Of all whose arguments are left to the men of the present time, no one has ever yet condemned injustice, or praised justice, otherwise than as respects the repute, honors and emoluments arising therefrom; while, as respects either of them in itself, and subsisting by its own power in the soul of the possessor, and concealed both from gods and men, no one has yet sufficiently investigated, either in poetry or prose writings, — how, namely, that injustice is the greatest of all the evils that the soul has within it, and justice the greatest good."

His definition of ideas, as what is simple, permanent, uniform and self-existent, forever dis-

criminating them from the notions of the understanding, marks an era in the world. He was born to behold the self-evolving power of spirit, endless, generator of new ends; a power which is the key at once to the centrality and the evanescence of things. Plato is so centred that he can well spare all his dogmas. Thus the fact of knowledge and ideas reveals to him the fact of eternity; and the doctrine of reminiscence he offers as the most probable particular explication. Call that fanciful, — it matters not: the connection between our knowledge and the abyss of being is still real, and the explication must be not less magnificent.

He has indicated every eminent point in speculation. He wrote on the scale of the mind itself, so that all things have symmetry in his tablet. He put in all the past, without weariness, and descended into detail with a courage like that he witnessed in nature. One would say that his forerunners had mapped out each a farm or a district or an island, in intellectual geography, but that Plato first drew the sphere. He domesticates the soul in nature: man is the microcosm. All the circles of the visible heaven represent as many circles in the rational soul. There is no lawless particle, and there is nothing casual in the action

of the human mind. The names of things, too, are fatal, following the nature of things. All the gods of the Pantheon are, by their names, significant of a profound sense. The gods are the ideas. Pan is speech, or manifestation; Saturn, the contemplative; Jove, the regal soul; and Mars, passion. Venus is proportion; Calliope, the soul of the world; Aglaia, intellectual illustration.

These thoughts, in sparkles of light, had appeared often to pious and to poetic souls; but this well-bred, all-knowing Greek geometer comes with command, gathers them all up into rank and gradation, the Euclid of holiness, and marries the two parts of nature. Before all men, he saw the intellectual values of the moral sentiment. He describes his own ideal, when he paints, in Timæus, a god leading things from disorder into order. He kindled a fire so truly in the centre that we see the sphere illuminated, and can distinguish poles, equator and lines of latitude, every arc and node: a theory so averaged, so modulated, that you would say the winds of ages had swept through this rhythmic structure, and not that it was the brief extempore blotting of one short-lived scribe.[1] Hence it has

happened that a very well-marked class of souls, namely those who delight in giving a spiritual, that is, an ethico-intellectual expression to every truth, by exhibiting an ulterior end which is yet legitimate to it, — are said to Platonize. Thus, Michael Angelo is a Platonist in his sonnets: Shakspeare is a Platonist when he writes, —

> "Nature is made better by no mean,
> But nature makes that mean,"

or, —

> "He, that can endure
> To follow with allegiance a fallen lord,
> Does conquer him that did his master conquer,
> And earns a place in the story."

Hamlet is a pure Platonist, and 't is the magnitude only of Shakspeare's proper genius that hinders him from being classed as the most eminent of this school. Swedenborg, throughout his prose poem of "Conjugal Love," is a Platonist.

His subtlety commended him to men of thought. The secret of his popular success is the moral aim which endeared him to mankind. "Intellect," he said, "is king of heaven and of earth;" but in Plato, intellect is always moral. His writings have also the sempiternal youth of poetry. For their arguments, most of them, might have been couched in sonnets: and poetry

has never soared higher than in the Timæus and the Phædrus. As the poet, too, he is only contemplative. He did not, like Pythagoras, break himself with an institution. All his painting in the Republic must be esteemed mythical, with intent to bring out, sometimes in violent colors, his thought. You cannot institute, without peril of charlatanism.

It was a high scheme, his absolute privilege for the best (which, to make emphatic, he expressed by community of women), as the premium which he would set on grandeur. There shall be exempts of two kinds: first, those who by demerit have put themselves below protection, — outlaws; and secondly, those who by eminence of nature and desert are out of the reach of your rewards. Let such be free of the city and above the law. We confide them to themselves; let them do with us as they will. Let none presume to measure the irregularities of Michael Angelo and Socrates by village scales.

In his eighth book of the Republic, he throws a little mathematical dust in our eyes. I am sorry to see him, after such noble superiorities, permitting the lie to governors. Plato plays Providence a little with the baser sort, as people allow themselves with their dogs and cats.

III

SWEDENBORG; OR, THE MYSTIC

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AMONG eminent persons, those who are most dear to men are not of the class which the economist calls producers: they have nothing in their hands; they have not cultivated corn, nor made bread; they have not led out a colony, nor invented a loom. A higher class, in the estimation and love of this city-building market-going race of mankind, are the poets, who, from the intellectual kingdom, feed the thought and imagination with ideas and pictures which raise men out of the world of corn and money, and console them for the shortcomings of the day and the meanness of labor and traffic. Then, also, the philosopher has his value, who flatters the intellect of this laborer by engaging him with subtleties which instruct him in new faculties. Others may build cities; he is to understand them and keep them in awe. But there is a class who lead us into another region, — the world of morals or of will. What is singular about this region of thought is its claim. Wherever the sentiment of right comes in, it takes precedence of every thing else. For

other things, I make poetry of them; but the moral sentiment makes poetry of me.[1]

I have sometimes thought that he would render the greatest service to modern criticism, who should draw the line of relation that subsists between Shakspeare and Swedenborg. The human mind stands ever in perplexity, demanding intellect, demanding sanctity, impatient equally of each without the other. The reconciler has not yet appeared. If we tire of the saints, Shakspeare is our city of refuge. Yet the instincts presently teach that the problem of essence must take precedence of all others; — the questions of Whence? What? and Whither? and the solution of these must be in a life, and not in a book. A drama or poem is a proximate or oblique reply; but Moses, Menu, Jesus, work directly on this problem. The atmosphere of moral sentiment is a region of grandeur which reduces all material magnificence to toys, yet opens to every wretch that has reason the doors of the universe. Almost with a fierce haste it lays its empire on the man. In the language of the Koran, "God said, The heaven and the earth and all that is between them, think ye that we created them in jest, and that ye shall not return to us?" It is the kingdom of the will, and by

inspiring the will, which is the seat of personality, seems to convert the universe into a person;—

> "The realms of being to no other bow,
> Not only all are thine, but all are Thou."

All men are commanded by the saint. The Koran makes a distinct class of those who are by nature good, and whose goodness has an influence on others, and pronounces this class to be the aim of creation: the other classes are admitted to the feast of being, only as following in the train of this. And the Persian poet exclaims to a soul of this kind, —

> "Go boldly forth, and feast on being's banquet;
> Thou art the called, — the rest admitted with thee."

The privilege of this caste is an access to the secrets and structure of nature by some higher method than by experience. In common parlance, what one man is said to learn by experience, a man of extraordinary sagacity is said, without experience, to divine. The Arabians say, that Abul Khain, the mystic, and Abu Ali Seena, the philosopher, conferred together; and, on parting, the philosopher said, "All that he sees, I know;" and the mystic said, "All that he knows, I see."[1] If one should ask the reason of this intuition, the solution would lead

us into that property which Plato denoted as Reminiscence, and which is implied by the Bramins in the tenet of Transmigration. The soul having been often born, or, as the Hindoos say, "travelling the path of existence through thousands of births," having beheld the things which are here, those which are in heaven and those which are beneath, there is nothing of which she has not gained the knowledge: no wonder that she is able to recollect, in regard to any one thing, what formerly she knew. "For, all things in nature being linked and related, and the soul having heretofore known all, nothing hinders but that any man who has recalled to mind, or according to the common phrase has learned, one thing only, should of himself recover all his ancient knowledge, and find out again all the rest, if he have but courage and faint not in the midst of his researches. For inquiry and learning is reminiscence all." How much more, if he that inquires be a holy and godlike soul! For by being assimilated to the original soul, by whom and after whom all things subsist, the soul of man does then easily flow into all things, and all things flow into it: they mix; and he is present and sympathetic with their structure and law.[1]

This path is difficult, secret and beset with terror. The ancients called it *ecstasy* or absence, — a getting out of their bodies to think. All religious history contains traces of the trance of saints, — a beatitude, but without any sign of joy; earnest, solitary, even sad; "the flight," Plotinus called it, "of the alone to the alone;" Μύησις, the closing of the eyes, — whence our word, *Mystic*. The trances of Socrates, Plotinus, Porphyry, Behmen, Bunyan, Fox, Pascal, Guyon, Swedenborg, will readily come to mind. But what as readily comes to mind is the accompaniment of disease. This beatitude comes in terror, and with shocks to the mind of the receiver.

"It o'erinforms the tenement of clay," [1]

and drives the man mad; or gives a certain violent bias which taints his judgment. In the chief examples of religious illumination somewhat morbid has mingled, in spite of the unquestionable increase of mental power. Must the highest good drag after it a quality which neutralizes and discredits it? —

"Indeed, it takes
From our achievements, when performed at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute." [2]

Shall we say, that the economical mother dis-

burses so much earth and so much fire, by weight and meter, to make a man, and will not add a pennyweight, though a nation is perishing for a leader? Therefore the men of God purchased their science by folly or pain. If you will have pure carbon, carbuncle, or diamond, to make the brain transparent, the trunk and organs shall be so much the grosser: instead of porcelain they are potter's earth, clay, or mud.

In modern times no such remarkable example of this introverted mind has occurred as in Emanuel Swedenborg, born in Stockholm, in 1688. This man, who appeared to his contemporaries a visionary and elixir of moonbeams, no doubt led the most real life of any man then in the world: and now, when the royal and ducal Frederics, Christians and Brunswicks of that day have slid into oblivion, he begins to spread himself into the minds of thousands. As happens in great men, he seemed, by the variety and amount of his powers, to be a composition of several persons, — like the giant fruits which are matured in gardens by the union of four or five single blossoms. His frame is on a larger scale and possesses the advantages of size. As it is easier to see the reflection of the great sphere in large globes, though defaced by some crack or

blemish, than in drops of water, so men of large calibre, though with some eccentricity or madness, like Pascal or Newton, help us more than balanced mediocre minds.

His youth and training could not fail to be extraordinary. Such a boy could not whistle or dance, but goes grubbing into mines and mountains, prying into chemistry and optics, physiology, mathematics and astronomy, to find images fit for the measure of his versatile and capacious brain. He was a scholar from a child, and was educated at Upsala. At the age of twenty-eight he was made Assessor of the Board of Mines by Charles XII. In 1716, he left home for four years and visited the universities of England, Holland, France and Germany. He performed a notable feat of engineering in 1718, at the siege of Frederikshald, by hauling two galleys, five boats and a sloop, some fourteen English miles overland, for the royal service. In 1721 he journeyed over Europe to examine mines and smelting works. He published in 1716 his Dædalus Hyperboreus, and from this time for the next thirty years was employed in the composition and publication of his scientific works. With the like force he threw himself into theology. In 1743, when he was fifty-

four years old, what is called his illumination began. All his metallurgy and transportation of ships overland was absorbed into this ecstasy. He ceased to publish any more scientific books, withdrew from his practical labors and devoted himself to the writing and publication of his voluminous theological works, which were printed at his own expense, or at that of the Duke of Brunswick or other prince, at Dresden, Leipsic, London, or Amsterdam. Later, he resigned his office of Assessor: the salary attached to this office continued to be paid to him during his life. His duties had brought him into intimate acquaintance with King Charles XII., by whom he was much consulted and honored. The like favor was continued to him by his successor. At the Diet of 1751, Count Hopken says, the most solid memorials on finance were from his pen. In Sweden he appears to have attracted a marked regard. His rare science and practical skill, and the added fame of second sight and extraordinary religious knowledge and gifts, drew to him queens, nobles, clergy, shipmasters and people about the ports through which he was wont to pass in his many voyages. The clergy interfered a little with the importation and publication of his religious works,

but he seems to have kept the friendship of men in power. He was never married. He had great modesty and gentleness of bearing. His habits were simple; he lived on bread, milk and vegetables; he lived in a house situated in a large garden; he went several times to England, where he does not seem to have attracted any attention whatever from the learned or the eminent; and died at London, March 29, 1772, of apoplexy, in his eighty-fifth year. He is described, when in London, as a man of a quiet, clerical habit, not averse to tea and coffee, and kind to children. He wore a sword when in full velvet dress, and, whenever he walked out, carried a gold-headed cane. There is a common portrait of him in antique coat and wig, but the face has a wandering or vacant air.

The genius which was to penetrate the science of the age with a far more subtle science; to pass the bounds of space and time, venture into the dim spirit-realm, and attempt to establish a new religion in the world, — began its lessons in quarries and forges, in the smelting-pot and crucible, in ship-yards and dissecting-rooms. No one man is perhaps able to judge of the merits of his works on so many subjects. One is glad to learn that his books on mines and metals are

held in the highest esteem by those who understand these matters. It seems that he anticipated much science of the nineteenth century; anticipated, in astronomy, the discovery of the seventh planet,—but, unhappily, not also of the eighth; anticipated the views of modern astronomy in regard to the generation of earths by the sun; in magnetism, some important experiments and conclusions of later students; in chemistry, the atomic theory; in anatomy, the discoveries of Schlichting, Monro and Wilson; and first demonstrated the office of the lungs. His excellent English editor magnanimously lays no stress on his discoveries, since he was too great to care to be original; and we are to judge, by what he can spare, of what remains.

A colossal soul, he lies vast abroad on his times, uncomprehended by them, and requires a long focal distance to be seen; suggests, as Aristotle, Bacon, Selden,[1] Humboldt, that a certain vastness of learning, or *quasi* omnipresence of the human soul in nature, is possible. His superb speculation, as from a tower, over nature and arts, without ever losing sight of the texture and sequence of things, almost realizes his own picture, in the "Principia," of the original integrity of man. Over and above the merit of his partic-

ular discoveries, is the capital merit of his self-equality. A drop of water has the properties of the sea, but cannot exhibit a storm. There is beauty of a concert, as well as of a flute; strength of a host, as well as of a hero; and, in Swedenborg, those who are best acquainted with modern books will most admire the merit of mass. One of the missouriums and mastodons of literature, he is not to be measured by whole colleges of ordinary scholars. His stalwart presence would flutter the gowns of an university. Our books are false by being fragmentary: their sentences are *bonmots*, and not parts of natural discourse; childish expressions of surprise or pleasure in nature; or, worse, owing a brief notoriety to their petulance, or aversion from the order of nature; — being some curiosity or oddity, designedly not in harmony with nature and purposely framed to excite surprise, as jugglers do by concealing their means. But Swedenborg is systematic and respective of the world in every sentence; all the means are orderly given; his faculties work with astronomic punctuality, and this admirable writing is pure from all pertness or egotism.

Swedenborg was born into an atmosphere of great ideas. It is hard to say what was his own:

yet his life was dignified by noblest pictures of the universe. The robust Aristotelian method, with its breadth and adequateness, shaming our sterile and linear logic by its genial radiation, conversant with series and degree, with effects and ends, skilful to discriminate power from form, essence from accident, and opening, by its terminology and definition, high roads into nature, had trained a race of athletic philosophers. Harvey had shown the circulation of the blood; Gilbert had shown that the earth was a magnet; Descartes, taught by Gilbert's magnet, with its vortex, spiral and polarity, had filled Europe with the leading thought of vortical motion, as the secret of nature.[1] Newton, in the year in which Swedenborg was born, published the "Principia," and established the universal gravity. Malpighi, following the high doctrines of Hippocrates, Leucippus and Lucretius, had given emphasis to the dogma that nature works in leasts, — "tota in minimis existit natura."[2] Unrivalled dissectors, Swammerdam, Leuwenhoek, Winslow, Eustachius, Heister, Vesalius, Boerhaave, had left nothing for scalpel or microscope to reveal in human or comparative anatomy:[3] Linnæus, his contemporary, was affirming, in his beautiful science, that "Nature is

always like herself: "'and, lastly, the nobility of method, the largest application of principles, had been exhibited by Leibnitz and Christian Wolff, in cosmology; whilst Locke and Grotius had drawn the moral argument. What was left for a genius of the largest calibre but to go over their ground and verify and unite? It is easy to see, in these minds, the origin of Swedenborg's studies, and the suggestion of his problems. He had a capacity to entertain and vivify these volumes of thought. Yet the proximity of these geniuses, one or other of whom had introduced all his leading ideas, makes Swedenborg another example of the difficulty, even in a highly fertile genius, of proving originality, the first birth and annunciation of one of the laws of nature.

He named his favorite views the doctrine of Forms, the doctrine of Series and Degrees, the doctrine of Influx, the doctrine of Correspondence. His statement of these doctrines deserves to be studied in his books. Not every man can read them, but they will reward him who can. His theologic works are valuable to illustrate these. His writings would be a sufficient library to a lonely and athletic student; and the "Economy of the Animal Kingdom" is one of those books which, by the sustained dignity of think-

ing, is an honor to the human race. He had studied spars and metals to some purpose. His varied and solid knowledge makes his style lustrous with points and shooting spiculæ of thought, and resembling one of those winter mornings when the air sparkles with crystals. The grandeur of the topics makes the grandeur of the style. He was apt for cosmology, because of that native perception of identity which made mere size of no account to him. In the atom of magnetic iron he saw the quality which would generate the spiral motion of sun and planet.

The thoughts in which he lived were, the universality of each law in nature; the Platonic doctrine of the scale or degrees; the version or conversion of each into other, and so the correspondence of all the parts; the fine secret that little explains large, and large, little; the centrality of man in nature, and the connection that subsists throughout all things: he saw that the human body was strictly universal, or an instrument through which the soul feeds and is fed by the whole of matter; so that he held, in exact antagonism to the skeptics, that "the wiser a man is, the more will he be a worshipper of the Deity." In short, he was a believer in the Identity-philosophy, which he held not idly, as the

dreamers of Berlin or Boston, but which he experimented with and established through years of labor, with the heart and strength of the rudest Viking that his rough Sweden ever sent to battle.

This theory dates from the oldest philosophers, and derives perhaps its best illustration from the newest. It is this, that Nature iterates her means perpetually on successive planes. In the old aphorism, *nature is always self-similar*. In the plant, the eye or germinative point opens to a leaf, then to another leaf, with a power of transforming the leaf into radicle, stamen, pistil, petal, bract, sepal, or seed. The whole art of the plant is still to repeat leaf on leaf without end, the more or less of heat, light, moisture and food determining the form it shall assume. In the animal, nature makes a vertebra, or a spine of vertebræ, and helps herself still by a new spine, with a limited power of modifying its form, — spine on spine, to the end of the world. A poetic anatomist, in our own day, teaches that a snake, being a horizontal line, and man, being an erect line, constitute a right angle; and between the lines of this mystical quadrant all animated beings find their place: and he assumes the hair-worm, the span-worm, or the snake, as

the type or prediction of the spine. Manifestly, at the end of the spine, Nature puts out smaller spines, as arms; at the end of the arms, new spines, as hands; at the other end, she repeats the process, as legs and feet. At the top of the column she puts out another spine, which doubles or loops itself over, as a span-worm, into a ball, and forms the skull, with extremities again: the hands being now the upper jaw, the feet the lower jaw, the fingers and toes being represented this time by upper and lower teeth.[1] This new spine is destined to high uses. It is a new man on the shoulders of the last. It can almost shed its trunk and manage to live alone, according to the Platonic idea in the Timæus. Within it, on a higher plane, all that was done in the trunk repeats itself. Nature recites her lesson once more in a higher mood. The mind is a finer body, and resumes its functions of feeding, digesting, absorbing, excluding and generating, in a new and ethereal element. Here in the brain is all the process of alimentation repeated, in the acquiring, comparing, digesting and assimilating of experience. Here again is the mystery of generation repeated. In the brain are male and female faculties; here is marriage, here is fruit. And there is no limit to this as-

cending scale, but series on series. Every thing, at the end of one use, is taken up into the next, each series punctually repeating every organ and process of the last. We are adapted to infinity. We are hard to please, and love nothing which ends; and in nature is no end, but every thing at the end of one use is lifted into a superior, and the ascent of these things climbs into dæmonic and celestial natures.[1] Creative force, like a musical composer, goes on unweariedly repeating a simple air or theme, now high, now low, in solo, in chorus, ten thousand times reverberated, till it fills earth and heaven with the chant.

Gravitation, as explained by Newton, is good, but grander when we find chemistry only an extension of the law of masses into particles, and that the atomic theory shows the action of chemistry to be mechanical also. Metaphysics shows us a sort of gravitation operative also in the mental phenomena; and the terrible tabulation of the French statists brings every piece of whim and humor to be reducible also to exact numerical ratios. If one man in twenty thousand, or in thirty thousand, eats shoes or marries his grandmother, then in every twenty thousand or thirty thousand is found one man who eats shoes or marries his grandmother. What

we call gravitation, and fancy ultimate, is one fork of a mightier stream for which we have yet no name. Astronomy is excellent; but it must come up into life to have its full value, and not remain there in globes and spaces. The globule of blood gyrates around its own axis in the human veins, as the planet in the sky; and the circles of intellect relate to those of the heavens. Each law of nature has the like universality; eating, sleep or hybernation, rotation, generation, metamorphosis, vortical motion, which is seen in eggs as in planets. These grand rhymes or returns in nature, — the dear, best-known face startling us at every turn, under a mask so unexpected that we think it the face of a stranger, and carrying up the semblance into divine forms, — delighted the prophetic eye of Swedenborg; and he must be reckoned a leader in that revolution, which, by giving to science an idea, has given to an aimless accumulation of experiments, guidance and form and a beating heart.

I own with some regret that his printed works amount to about fifty stout octavos, his scientific works being about half of the whole number; and it appears that a mass of manuscript still unedited remains in the royal library at Stock-

holm. The scientific works have just now been translated into English, in an excellent edition.

Swedenborg printed these scientific books in the ten years from 1734 to 1744, and they remained from that time neglected; and now, after their century is complete, he has at last found a pupil in Mr. Wilkinson, in London, a philosophic critic, with a coequal vigor of understanding and imagination comparable only to Lord Bacon's, who has restored his master's buried books to the day, and transferred them, with every advantage, from their forgotten Latin into English, to go round the world in our commercial and conquering tongue. This startling reappearance of Swedenborg, after a hundred years, in his pupil, is not the least remarkable fact in his history. Aided it is said by the munificence of Mr. Clissold, and also by his literary skill, this piece of poetic justice is done. The admirable preliminary discourses with which Mr. Wilkinson has enriched these volumes, throw all the contemporary philosophy of England into shade, and leave me nothing to say on their proper grounds.[1]

The "Animal Kingdom" is a book of wonderful merits. It was written with the highest end, — to put science and the soul, long es

tranged from each other, at one again. It was an anatomist's account of the human body, in the highest style of poetry. Nothing can exceed the bold and brilliant treatment of a subject usually so dry and repulsive.[1] He saw nature "wreathing through an everlasting spiral, with wheels that never dry, on axles that never creak," and sometimes sought "to uncover those secret recesses where Nature is sitting at the fires in the depths of her laboratory;" whilst the picture comes recommended by the hard fidelity with which it is based on practical anatomy. It is remarkable that this sublime genius decides peremptorily for the analytic, against the synthetic method; and, in a book whose genius is a daring poetic synthesis, claims to confine himself to a rigid experience.

He knows, if he only, the flowing of nature, and how wise was that old answer of Amasis to him who bade him drink up the sea, — "Yes, willingly, if you will stop the rivers that flow in."[2] Few knew as much about nature and her subtle manners, or expressed more subtly her goings. He thought as large a demand is made on our faith by nature, as by miracles. "He noted that in her proceeding from first principles through her several subordinations, there

was no state through which she did not pass, as if her path lay through all things." "For as often as she betakes herself upward from visible phenomena, or, in other words, withdraws herself inward, she instantly as it were disappears, while no one knows what has become of her, or whither she is gone: so that it is necessary to take science as a guide in pursuing her steps."

The pursuing the inquiry under the light of an end or final cause gives wonderful animation, a sort of personality to the whole writing. This book announces his favorite dogmas. The ancient doctrine of Hippocrates, that the brain is a gland; and of Leucippus, that the atom may be known by the mass; or, in Plato, the macrocosm by the microcosm; and, in the verses of Lucretius, —

> Ossa videlicet e pauxillis atque minutis
> Ossibus sic et de pauxillis atque minutis
> Visceribus viscus gigni, sanguenque creari
> Sanguinis inter se multis coeuntibus guttis;
> Ex aurique putat micis consistere posse
> Aurum, et de terris terram concrescere parvis;
> Ignibus ex igneis, humorem humoribus esse.[1]

> "The principle of all things, entrails made
> Of smallest entrails; bone, of smallest bone;
> Blood, of small sanguine drops reduced to one;

> Gold, of small grains; earth, of small sands compacted;
> Small drops to water, sparks to fire contracted:"

and which Malpighi had summed in his maxim that "nature exists entire in leasts," — is a favorite thought of Swedenborg. "It is a constant law of the organic body that large, compound, or visible forms exist and subsist from smaller, simpler and ultimately from invisible forms, which act similarly to the larger ones, but more perfectly and more universally; and the least forms so perfectly and universally as to involve an idea representative of their entire universe." The unities of each organ are so many little organs, homogeneous with their compound: the unities of the tongue are little tongues; those of the stomach, little stomachs; those of the heart are little hearts. This fruitful idea furnishes a key to every secret. What was too small for the eye to detect was read by the aggregates; what was too large, by the units. There is no end to his application of the thought. "Hunger is an aggregate of very many little hungers, or losses of blood by the little veins all over the body." It is a key to his theology also. "Man is a kind of very minute heaven, corresponding to the world of spirits and to heaven. Every particular idea of man, and every affection, yea, every

smallest part of his affection, is an image and effigy of him. A spirit may be known from only a single thought. God is the grand man."

The hardihood and thoroughness of his study of nature required a theory of forms also. "Forms ascend in order from the lowest to the highest. The lowest form is angular, or the terrestrial and corporeal. The second and next higher form is the circular, which is also called the perpetual-angular, because the circumference of a circle is a perpetual angle. The form above this is the spiral, parent and measure of circular forms: its diameters are not rectilinear, but variously circular, and have a spherical surface for centre; therefore it is called the perpetual-circular. The form above this is the vortical, or perpetual-spiral: next, the perpetual-vortical, or celestial: last, the perpetual-celestial, or spiritual."

Was it strange that a genius so bold should take the last step also, should conceive that he might attain the science of all sciences, to unlock the meaning of the world? In the first volume of the "Animal Kingdom," he broaches the subject in a remarkable note: — "In our doctrine of Representations and Correspondences we shall treat of both these symbolical

and typical resemblances, and of the astonishing things which occur, I will not say in the living body only, but throughout nature, and which correspond so entirely to supreme and spiritual things that one would swear that the physical world was purely symbolical of the spiritual world; insomuch that if we choose to express any natural truth in physical and definite vocal terms, and to convert these terms only into the corresponding and spiritual terms, we shall by this means elicit a spiritual truth or theological dogma, in place of the physical truth or precept: although no mortal would have predicted that any thing of the kind could possibly arise by bare literal transposition; inasmuch as the one precept, considered separately from the other, appears to have absolutely no relation to it. I intend hereafter to communicate a number of examples of such correspondences, together with a vocabulary containing the terms of spiritual things, as well as of the physical things for which they are to be substituted. This symbolism pervades the living body."

The fact thus explicitly stated is implied in all poetry, in allegory, in fable, in the use of emblems and in the structure of language. Plato knew it, as is evident from his twice bi-

sected line in the sixth book of the Republic. Lord Bacon had found that truth and nature differed only as seal and print; and he instanced some physical propositions, with their translation into a moral or political sense. Behmen, and all mystics, imply this law in their dark riddle-writing. The poets, in as far as they are poets, use it; but it is known to them only as the magnet was known for ages, as a toy. Swedenborg first put the fact into a detached and scientific statement, because it was habitually present to him, and never not seen. It was involved, as we explained already, in the doctrine of identity and iteration, because the mental series exactly tallies with the material series. It required an insight that could rank things in order and series; or rather it required such rightness of position that the poles of the eye should coincide with the axis of the world. The earth had fed its mankind through five or six millenniums, and they had sciences, religions, philosophies, and yet had failed to see the correspondence of meaning between every part and every other part. And, down to this hour, literature has no book in which the symbolism of things is scientifically opened. One would say that as soon as men had the first hint that

every sensible object, — animal, rock, river, air, — nay, space and time, subsists not for itself, nor finally to a material end, but as a picture-language to tell another story of beings and duties, other science would be put by, and a science of such grand presage would absorb all faculties: that each man would ask of all objects what they mean: Why does the horizon hold me fast, with my joy and grief, in this centre? Why hear I the same sense from countless differing voices, and read one never quite expressed fact in endless picture-language? Yet whether it be that these things will not be intellectually learned, or that many centuries must elaborate and compose so rare and opulent a soul, — there is no comet, rock-stratum, fossil, fish, quadruped, spider, or fungus, that, for itself, does not interest more scholars and classifiers than the meaning and upshot of the frame of things.[1]

But Swedenborg was not content with the culinary use of the world. In his fifty-fourth year these thoughts held him fast, and his profound mind admitted the perilous opinion, too frequent in religious history, that he was an abnormal person, to whom was granted the privilege of conversing with angels and spirits; and

this ecstasy connected itself with just this office of explaining the moral import of the sensible world. To a right perception, at once broad and minute, of the order of nature, he added the comprehension of the moral laws in their widest social aspects; but whatever he saw, through some excessive determination to form in his constitution, he saw not abstractly, but in pictures, heard it in dialogues, constructed it in events. When he attempted to announce the law most sanely, he was forced to couch it in parable.

Modern psychology offers no similar example of a deranged balance. The principal powers continued to maintain a healthy action, and to a reader who can make due allowance in the report for the reporter's peculiarities, the results are still instructive, and a more striking testimony to the sublime laws he announced than any that balanced dulness could afford. He attempts to give some account of the *modus* of the new state, affirming that "his presence in the spiritual world is attended with a certain separation, but only as to the intellectual part of his mind, not as to the will part;" and he affirms that "he sees, with the internal sight, the things that are in another life, more clearly than he sees the things which are here in the world."

Having adopted the belief that certain books of the Old and New Testaments were exact allegories, or written in the angelic and ecstatic mode, he employed his remaining years in extricating from the literal, the universal sense. He had borrowed from Plato the fine fable of "a most ancient people, men better than we and dwelling nigher to the gods;" [1] and Swedenborg added that they used the earth symbolically; that these, when they saw terrestrial objects, did not think at all about them, but only about those which they signified. The correspondence between thoughts and things henceforward occupied him. "The very organic form resembles the end inscribed on it." A man is in general and in particular an organized justice or injustice, selfishness or gratitude. And the cause of this harmony he assigned in the Arcana: "The reason why all and single things, in the heavens and on earth, are representative, is because they exist from an influx of the Lord, through heaven." This design of exhibiting such correspondences, which, if adequately executed, would be the poem of the world, in which all history and science would play an essential part, was narrowed and defeated by the exclusively theologic direction which his inquiries took. His

perception of nature is not human and universal, but is mystical and Hebraic. He fastens each natural object to a theologic notion; — a horse signifies carnal understanding; a tree, perception; the moon, faith; a cat means this; an ostrich that; an artichoke this other; — and poorly tethers every symbol to a several ecclesiastic sense. The slippery Proteus is not so easily caught. In nature, each individual symbol plays innumerable parts, as each particle of matter circulates in turn through every system. The central identity enables any one symbol to express successively all the qualities and shades of real being. In the transmission of the heavenly waters, every hose fits every hydrant. Nature avenges herself speedily on the hard pedantry that would chain her waves. She is no literalist. Every thing must be taken genially, and we must be at the top of our condition to understand any thing rightly.[1]

His theological bias thus fatally narrowed his interpretation of nature, and the dictionary of symbols is yet to be written. But the interpreter whom mankind must still expect, will find no predecessor who has approached so near to the true problem.

Swedenborg styles himself in the title-page

of his books, "Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ;" and by force of intellect, and in effect, he is the last Father in the Church, and is not likely to have a successor. No wonder that his depth of ethical wisdom should give him influence as a teacher. To the withered traditional church, yielding dry catechisms, he let in nature again, and the worshipper, escaping from the vestry of verbs and texts, is surprised to find himself a party to the whole of his religion. His religion thinks for him and is of universal application. He turns it on every side; it fits every part of life, interprets and dignifies every circumstance.[1] Instead of a religion which visited him diplomatically three or four times, — when he was born, when he married, when he fell sick and when he died, and, for the rest, never interfered with him, — here was a teaching which accompanied him all day, accompanied him even into sleep and dreams; into his thinking, and showed him through what a long ancestry his thoughts descend; into society, and showed by what affinities he was girt to his equals and his counterparts; into natural objects, and showed their origin and meaning, what are friendly, and what are hurtful; and opened the future world by indicating the continuity of the same laws.

His disciples allege that their intellect is invigorated by the study of his books.

There is no such problem for criticism as his theological writings, their merits are so commanding, yet such grave deductions must be made. Their immense and sandy diffuseness is like the prairie or the desert, and their incongruities are like the last deliration. He is superfluously explanatory, and his feeling of the ignorance of men, strangely exaggerated. Men take truths of this nature very fast. Yet he abounds in assertions, he is a rich discoverer, and of things which most import us to know. His thought dwells in essential resemblances, like the resemblance of a house to the man who built it. He saw things in their law, in likeness of function, not of structure. There is an invariable method and order in his delivery of his truth, the habitual proceeding of the mind from inmost to outmost. What earnestness and weightiness, — his eye never roving, without one swell of vanity, or one look to self in any common form of literary pride! a theoretic or speculative man, but whom no practical man in the universe could affect to scorn. Plato is a gownsman; his garment, though of purple, and almost sky-woven, is an academic robe and hin-

ders action with its voluminous folds. But this mystic is awful to Cæsar. Lycurgus himself would bow.

The moral insight of Swedenborg, the correction of popular errors, the announcement of ethical laws, take him out of comparison with any other modern writer and entitle him to a place, vacant for some ages, among the lawgivers of mankind. That slow but commanding influence which he has acquired, like that of other religious geniuses, must be excessive also, and have its tides, before it subsides into a permanent amount. Of course what is real and universal cannot be confined to the circle of those who sympathize strictly with his genius, but will pass forth into the common stock of wise and just thinking. The world has a sure chemistry, by which it extracts what is excellent in its children and lets fall the infirmities and limitations of the grandest mind.[1]

That metempsychosis which is familiar in the old mythology of the Greeks, collected in Ovid and in the Indian Transmigration, and is there *objective*, or really takes place in bodies by alien will, — in Swedenborg's mind has a more philosophic character. It is subjective, or depends entirely upon the thought of the person. All

things in the universe arrange themselves to each person anew, according to his ruling love. Man is such as his affection and thought are. Man is man by virtue of willing, not by virtue of knowing and understanding. As he is, so he sees. The marriages of the world are broken up. Interiors associate all in the spiritual world. Whatever the angels looked upon was to them celestial. Each Satan appears to himself a man; to those as bad as he, a comely man; to the purified, a heap of carrion. Nothing can resist states: every thing gravitates: like will to like: what we call poetic justice takes effect on the spot. We have come into a world which is a living poem. Every thing is as I am. Bird and beast is not bird and beast, but emanation and effluvia of the minds and wills of men there present. Every one makes his own house and state. The ghosts are tormented with the fear of death and cannot remember that they have died. They who are in evil and falsehood are afraid of all others. Such as have deprived themselves of charity, wander and flee: the societies which they approach discover their quality and drive them away. The covetous seem to themselves to be abiding in cells where their money is deposited, and these to be infested with mice. They who place merit in

good works seem to themselves to cut wood. "I asked such, if they were not wearied? They replied, that they have not yet done work enough to merit heaven."

He delivers golden sayings which express with singular beauty the ethical laws; as when he uttered that famed sentence, that "In heaven the angels are advancing continually to the spring-time of their youth, so that the oldest angel appears the youngest:" "The more angels, the more room:" "The perfection of man is the love of use:" "Man, in his perfect form, is heaven:" "What is from Him, is Him:" "Ends always ascend as nature descends." And the truly poetic account of the writing in the inmost heaven, which, as it consists of inflexions according to the form of heaven, can be read without instruction. He almost justifies his claim to preternatural vision, by strange insights of the structure of the human body and mind. "It is never permitted to any one, in heaven, to stand behind another and look at the back of his head; for then the influx which is from the Lord is disturbed." The angels, from the sound of the voice, know a man's love; from the articulation of the sound, his wisdom; and from the sense of the words, his science.

In the "Conjugal Love," he has unfolded the science of marriage. Of this book one would say that with the highest elements it has failed of success. It came near to be the Hymn of Love, which Plato attempted in the "Banquet;" the love, which, Dante says, Casella sang among the angels in Paradise;[1] and which, as rightly celebrated, in its genesis, fruition and effect, might well entrance the souls, as it would lay open the genesis of all institutions, customs and manners. The book had been grand if the Hebraism had been omitted and the law stated without Gothicism, as ethics, and with that scope for ascension of state which the nature of things requires. It is a fine Platonic development of the science of marriage; teaching that sex is universal, and not local; virility in the male qualifying every organ, act, and thought; and the feminine in woman. Therefore in the real or spiritual world the nuptial union is not momentary, but incessant and total; and chastity not a local, but a universal virtue; unchastity being discovered as much in the trading, or planting, or speaking, or philosophizing, as in generation; and that, though the virgins he saw in heaven were beautiful, the wives were incomparably more beautiful, and went on increasing in beauty evermore.

Yet Swedenborg, after his mode, pinned his theory to a temporary form. He exaggerates the circumstance of marriage; and though he finds false marriages on earth, fancies a wiser choice in heaven. But of progressive souls, all loves and friendships are momentary. *Do you love me?* means, Do you see the same truth? If you do, we are happy with the same happiness: but presently one of us passes into the perception of new truth; — we are divorced, and no tension in nature can hold us to each other. I know how delicious is this cup of love, — I existing for you, you existing for me; but it is a child's clinging to his toy; an attempt to eternize the fireside and nuptial chamber; to keep the picture-alphabet through which our first lessons are prettily conveyed. The Eden of God is bare and grand: like the out-door landscape remembered from the evening fireside, it seems cold and desolate whilst you cower over the coals, but once abroad again, we pity those who can forego the magnificence of nature for candle-light and cards. Perhaps the true subject of the "Conjugal Love" is *Conversation*, whose laws are profoundly set forth. It is false, if literally applied to marriage. For God is the bride or bridegroom of the soul. Heaven is not the pairing of two, but the com-

munion of all souls. We meet, and dwell an instant under the temple of one thought, and part, as though we parted not, to join another thought in other fellowships of joy. So far from there being anything divine in the low and proprietary sense of *Do you love me?* it is only when you leave and lose me by casting yourself on a sentiment which is higher than both of us, that I draw near and find myself at your side; and I am repelled if you fix your eye on me and demand love. In fact, in the spiritual world we change sexes every moment. You love the worth in me; then I am your husband: but it is not me, but the worth, that fixes the love; and that worth is a drop of the ocean of worth that is beyond me. Meantime I adore the greater worth in another, and so become his wife. He aspires to a higher worth in another spirit, and is wife or receiver of that influence.[1]

Whether from a self-inquisitorial habit that he grew into from jealousy of the sins to which men of thought are liable, he has acquired, in disentangling and demonstrating that particular form of moral disease, an acumen which no conscience can resist. I refer to his feeling of the profanation of thinking to what is good, "from scien-

tifics." "To reason about faith, is to doubt and deny." He was painfully alive to the difference between knowing and doing, and this sensibility is incessantly expressed. Philosophers are, therefore, vipers, cockatrices, asps, hemorrhoids, presters, and flying serpents; literary men are conjurors and charlatans.

But this topic suggests a sad afterthought, that here we find the seat of his own pain. Possibly Swedenborg paid the penalty of introverted faculties. Success, or a fortunate genius, seems to depend on a happy adjustment of heart and brain; on a due proportion, hard to hit, of moral and mental power, which perhaps obeys the law of those chemical ratios which make a proportion in volumes necessary to combination, as when gases will combine in certain fixed rates, but not at any rate. It is hard to carry a full cup; and this man, profusely endowed in heart and mind, early fell into dangerous discord with himself. In his Animal Kingdom he surprised us by declaring that he loved analysis, and not synthesis; and now, after his fiftieth year, he falls into jealousy of his intellect; and though aware that truth is not solitary nor is goodness solitary, but both must ever mix and marry, he makes war on his mind, takes the part of the con-

science against it, and, on all occasions, traduces and blasphemes it. The violence is instantly avenged. Beauty is disgraced, love is unlovely, when truth, the half part of heaven, is denied, as much as when a bitterness in men of talent leads to satire and destroys the judgment. He is wise, but wise in his own despite. There is an air of infinite grief and the sound of wailing all over and through this lurid universe. A vampyre sits in the seat of the prophet and turns with gloomy appetite to the images of pain. Indeed, a bird does not more readily weave its nest, or a mole bore into the ground, than this seer of the souls substructs a new hell and pit, each more abominable than the last, round every new crew of offenders. He was let down through a column that seemed of brass, but it was formed of angelic spirits, that he might descend safely amongst the unhappy, and witness the vastation of souls and hear there, for a long continuance, their lamentations: he saw their tormentors, who increase and strain pangs to infinity; he saw the hell of the jugglers, the hell of the assassins, the hell of the lascivious; the hell of robbers, who kill and boil men; the infernal tun of the deceitful; the excrementitious hells; the hell of the revengeful, whose faces resembled a round,

broad cake, and their arms rotate like a wheel. Except Rabelais and Dean Swift nobody ever had such science of filth and corruption.

These books should be used with caution. It is dangerous to sculpture these evanescing images of thought. True in transition, they become false if fixed. It requires, for his just apprehension, almost a genius equal to his own. But when his visions become the stereotyped language of multitudes of persons of all degrees of age and capacity, they are perverted. The wise people of the Greek race were accustomed to lead the most intelligent and virtuous young men, as part of their education, through the Eleusinian mysteries, wherein, with much pomp and graduation, the highest truths known to ancient wisdom were taught. An ardent and contemplative young man, at eighteen or twenty years, might read once these books of Swedenborg, these mysteries of love and conscience, and then throw them aside for ever.[1] Genius is ever haunted by similar dreams, when the hells and the heavens are opened to it. But these pictures are to be held as mystical, that is, as a quite arbitrary and accidental picture of the truth, — not as the truth. Any other symbol would be as good; then this is safely seen.

Swedenborg's system of the world wants central spontaneity; it is dynamic, not vital, and lacks power to generate life. There is no individual in it. The universe is a gigantic crystal, all whose atoms and laminæ lie in uninterrupted order and with unbroken unity, but cold and still. What seems an individual and a will, is none. There is an immense chain of intermediation, extending from centre to extremes, which bereaves every agency of all freedom and character.[1] The universe, in his poem, suffers under a magnetic sleep, and only reflects the mind of the magnetizer. Every thought comes into each mind by influence from a society of spirits that surround it, and into these from a higher society, and so on. All his types mean the same few things. All his figures speak one speech. All his interlocutors Swedenborgize. Be they who they may, to this complexion must they come at last. This Charon ferries them all over in his boat; kings, counsellors, cavaliers, doctors, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Hans Sloane, King George II., Mahomet, or whomsoever, and all gather one grimness of hue and style. Only when Cicero comes by, our gentle seer sticks a little at saying he talked with Cicero, and with a touch of human relenting remarks, "one

whom it was given me to believe was Cicero;" and when the *soi disant* Roman opens his mouth, Rome and eloquence have ebbed away, — it is plain theologic Swedenborg like the rest. His heavens and hells are dull; fault of want of individualism. The thousand-fold relation of men is not there. The interest that attaches in nature to each man, because he is right by his wrong, and wrong by his right; because he defies all dogmatizing and classification, so many allowances and contingences and futurities are to be taken into account; strong by his vices, often paralyzed by his virtues; — sinks into entire sympathy with his society. This want reacts to the centre of the system. Though the agency of "the Lord" is in every line referred to by name, it never becomes alive. There is no lustre in that eye which gazes from the centre and which should vivify the immense dependency of beings.[1]

The vice of Swedenborg's mind is its theologic determination. Nothing with him has the liberality of universal wisdom, but we are always in a church. That Hebrew muse, which taught the lore of right and wrong to men, had the same excess of influence for him it has had for the nations. The mode, as well as the essence,

was sacred. Palestine is ever the more valuable as a chapter in universal history, and ever the less an available element in education.[1] The genius of Swedenborg, largest of all modern souls in this department of thought, wasted itself in the endeavor to reanimate and conserve what had already arrived at its natural term, and, in the great secular Providence, was retiring from its prominence, before Western modes of thought and expression. Swedenborg and Behmen both failed by attaching themselves to the Christian symbol, instead of to the moral sentiment, which carries innumerable christianities, humanities, divinities, in its bosom.

The excess of influence shows itself in the incongruous importation of a foreign rhetoric. 'What have I to do,' asks the impatient reader, 'with jasper and sardonyx, beryl and chalcedony; what with arks and passovers, ephahs and ephods; what with lepers and emerods; what with heave-offerings and unleavened bread, chariots of fire, dragons crowned and horned, behemoth and unicorn? Good for Orientals, these are nothing to me. The more learning you bring to explain them, the more glaring the impertinence. The more coherent and elaborate the system, the less I like it. I say,

with the Spartan, "Why do you speak so much to the purpose, of that which is nothing to the purpose?" [1] My learning is such as God gave me in my birth and habit, in the delight and study of my eyes and not of another man's. Of all absurdities, this of some foreigner proposing to take away my rhetoric and substitute his own, and amuse me with pelican and stork, instead of thrush and robin; palm-trees and shittim-wood, instead of sassafras and hickory, — seems the most needless.'

Locke said, "God, when he makes the prophet, does not unmake the man." Swedenborg's history points the remark. The parish disputes in the Swedish church between the friends and foes of Luther and Melancthon, concerning "faith alone" and "works alone," intrude themselves into his speculations upon the economy of the universe, and of the celestial societies. The Lutheran bishop's son, for whom the heavens are opened, so that he sees with eyes and in the richest symbolic forms the awful truth of things, and utters again in his books, as under a heavenly mandate, the indisputable secrets of moral nature, — with all these grandeurs resting upon him, remains the Lutheran bishop's son; his judgments are those

of a Swedish polemic, and his vast enlargements purchased by adamantine limitations. He carries his controversial memory with him in his visits to the souls. He is like Michael Angelo, who, in his frescoes, put the cardinal who had offended him to roast under a mountain of devils; or like Dante, who avenged, in vindictive melodies, all his private wrongs; or perhaps still more like Montaigne's parish priest, who, if a hail-storm passes over the village, thinks the day of doom is come, and the cannibals already have got the pip. Swedenborg confounds us not less with the pains of Melancthon and Luther and Wolfius, and his own books, which he advertises among the angels.

Under the same theologic cramp, many of his dogmas are bound. His cardinal position in morals is that evils should be shunned as sins. But he does not know what evil is, or what good is, who thinks any ground remains to be occupied, after saying that evil is to be shunned as evil. I doubt not he was led by the desire to insert the element of personality of Deity. But nothing is added. One man, you say, dreads erysipelas, — show him that this dread is evil: or, one dreads hell, — show him that *dread* is evil. He who loves goodness, harbors angels,

reveres reverence and lives with God. The less we have to do with our sins the better. No man can afford to waste his moments in compunctions. "That is active duty," say the Hindoos, "which is not for our bondage; that is knowledge, which is for our liberation: all other duty is good only unto weariness."

Another dogma, growing out of this pernicious theologic limitation, is his Inferno. Swedenborg has devils. Evil, according to old philosophers, is good in the making. That pure malignity can exist is the extreme proposition of unbelief. It is not to be entertained by a rational agent; it is atheism; it is the last profanation. Euripides rightly said, —

> "Goodness and being in the gods are one;
> He who imputes ill to them makes them none." [1]

To what a painful perversion had Gothic theology arrived, that Swedenborg admitted no conversion for evil spirits! But the divine effort is never relaxed; the carrion in the sun will convert itself to grass and flowers; and man, though in brothels, or jails, or on gibbets, is on his way to all that is good and true.[2] Burns, with the wild humor of his apostrophe to poor "auld Nickie Ben,"

> "O wad ye tak a thought, and mend!"

has the advantage of the vindictive theologian. Every thing is superficial and perishes but love and truth only. The largest is always the truest sentiment, and we feel the more generous spirit of the Indian Vishnu, — "I am the same to all mankind. There is not one who is worthy of my love or hatred. They who serve me with adoration, — I am in them, and they in me. If one whose ways are altogether evil serve me alone, he is as respectable as the just man; he is altogether well employed; he soon becometh of a virtuous spirit and obtaineth eternal happiness."

For the anomalous pretension of Revelations of the other world, — only his probity and genius can entitle it to any serious regard. His revelations destroy their credit by running into detail. If a man say that the Holy Ghost has informed him that the Last Judgment (or the last of the judgments) took place in 1757; or that the Dutch, in the other world, live in a heaven by themselves, and the English in a heaven by themselves; I reply that the Spirit which is holy is reserved, taciturn, and deals in laws. The rumors of ghosts and hobgoblins gossip and tell fortunes. The teachings of the high Spirit are abstemious, and, in regard to

particulars, negative. Socrates's Genius did not advise him to act or to find, but if he purposed to do somewhat not advantageous, it dissuaded him. "What God is," he said, "I know not; what he is not, I know." The Hindoos have denominated the Supreme Being, the "Internal Check." The illuminated Quakers explained their Light, not as somewhat which leads to any action, but it appears as an obstruction to any thing unfit.' But the right examples are private experiences, which are absolutely at one on this point. Strictly speaking, Swedenborg's revelation is a confounding of planes, — a capital offence in so learned a categorist. This is to carry the law of surface into the plane of substance, to carry individualism and its fopperies into the realm of essences and generals, — which is dislocation and chaos.

The secret of heaven is kept from age to age. No imprudent, no sociable angel ever dropt an early syllable to answer the longings of saints, the fears of mortals. We should have listened on our knees to any favorite, who, by stricter obedience, had brought his thoughts into parallelism with the celestial currents and could hint to human ears the scenery and circumstance of the newly parted soul. But it is certain that it

must tally with what is best in nature. It must not be inferior in tone to the already known works of the artist who sculptures the globes of the firmament and writes the moral law. It must be fresher than rainbows, stabler than mountains, agreeing with flowers, with tides and the rising and setting of autumnal stars. Melodious poets shall be hoarse as street ballads when once the penetrating key-note of nature and spirit is sounded, — the earth-beat, sea-beat, heart-beat, which makes the tune to which the sun rolls, and the globule of blood, and the sap of trees.

In this mood we hear the rumor that the seer has arrived, and his tale is told. But there is no beauty, no heaven : for angels, goblins. The sad muse loves night and death and the pit. His Inferno is mesmeric. His spiritual world bears the same relation to the generosities and joys of truth of which human souls have already made us cognizant, as a man's bad dreams bear to his ideal life.[1] It is indeed very like, in its endless power of lurid pictures, to the phenomena of dreaming, which nightly turns many an honest gentleman, benevolent but dyspeptic, into a wretch, skulking like a dog about the outer yards and kennels of creation. When he mounts into the

heaven, I do not hear its language. A man should not tell me that he has walked among the angels; his proof is that his eloquence makes me one. Shall the archangels be less majestic and sweet than the figures that have actually walked the earth? These angels that Swedenborg paints give us no very high idea of their discipline and culture: they are all country parsons: their heaven is a *fête champêtre*, an evangelical picnic, or French distribution of prizes to virtuous peasants. Strange, scholastic, didactic, passionless, bloodless man, who denotes classes of souls as a botanist disposes of a carex, and visits doleful hells as a stratum of chalk or hornblende! He has no sympathy. He goes up and down the world of men, a modern Rhadamanthus in gold-headed cane and peruke, and with nonchalance and the air of a referee, distributes souls. The warm, many-weathered, passionate-peopled world is to him a grammar of hieroglyphs, or an emblematic freemason's procession. How different is Jacob Behmen! *he* is tremulous with emotion and listens awe-struck, with the gentlest humanity, to the Teacher whose lessons he conveys; and when he asserts that, "in some sort, love is greater than God," his heart beats so high that the thumping against his leathern coat is

audible across the centuries. 'T is a great difference. Behmen is healthily and beautifully wise, notwithstanding the mystical narrowness and incommunicableness.[1] Swedenborg is disagreeably wise, and with all his accumulated gifts, paralyzes and repels.

It is the best sign of a great nature that it opens a foreground, and, like the breath of morning landscapes, invites us onward. Swedenborg is retrospective, nor can we divest him of his mattock and shroud. Some minds are for ever restrained from descending into nature; others are for ever prevented from ascending out of it. With a force of many men, he could never break the umbilical cord which held him to nature, and he did not rise to the platform of pure genius.

It is remarkable that this man, who, by his perception of symbols, saw the poetic construction of things and the primary relation of mind to matter, remained entirely devoid of the whole apparatus of poetic expression, which that perception creates. He knew the grammar and rudiments of the Mother-Tongue, — how could he not read off one strain into music? Was he like Saadi, who, in his vision, designed to fill his lap with the celestial flowers, as presents for his friends; but the fragrance of the roses so intoxi-

cated him that the skirt dropped from his hands? or is reporting a breach of the manners of that heavenly society? or was it that he saw the vision intellectually, and hence that chiding of the intellectual that pervades his books? Be it as it may, his books have no melody, no emotion, no humor, no relief to the dead prosaic level. In his profuse and accurate imagery is no pleasure, for there is no beauty. We wander forlorn in a lack-lustre landscape. No bird ever sang in all these gardens of the dead. The entire want of poetry in so transcendent a mind betokens the disease, and like a hoarse voice in a beautiful person, is a kind of warning. I think, sometimes, he will not be read longer. His great name will turn a sentence. His books have become a monument. His laurel so largely mixed with cypress, a charnel-breath so mingles with the temple incense, that boys and maids will shun the spot.

Yet in this immolation of genius and fame at the shrine of conscience, is a merit sublime beyond praise. He lived to purpose: he gave a verdict. He elected goodness as the clue to which the soul must cling in all this labyrinth of nature. Many opinions conflict as to the true centre. In the shipwreck, some cling to running

rigging, some to cask and barrel, some to spars, some to mast; the pilot chooses with science, — I plant myself here; all will sink before this; "he comes to land who sails with me."[1] Do not rely on heavenly favor, or on compassion to folly, or on prudence, on common sense, the old usage and main chance of men: nothing can keep you, — not fate, nor health, nor admirable intellect; none can keep you, but rectitude only, rectitude for ever and ever! And with a tenacity that never swerved in all his studies, inventions, dreams, he adheres to this brave choice. I think of him as of some transmigrating votary of Indian legend, who says 'Though I be dog, or jackal, or pismire, in the last rudiments of nature, under what integument or ferocity, I cleave to right, as the sure ladder that leads up to man and to God.'[2]

Swedenborg has rendered a double service to mankind, which is now only beginning to be known. By the science of experiment and use, he made his first steps: he observed and published the laws of nature; and ascending by just degrees from events to their summits and causes, he was fired with piety at the harmonies he felt, and abandoned himself to his joy and worship. This was his first service. If the glory was too

bright for his eyes to bear, if he staggered under the trance of delight, the more excellent is the spectacle he saw, the realities of being which beam and blaze through him, and which no infirmities of the prophet are suffered to obscure; and he renders a second passive service to men, not less than the first, perhaps, in the great circle of being, — and, in the retributions of spiritual nature, not less glorious or less beautiful to himself.

IV

MONTAIGNE; OR, THE SKEPTIC

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EVERY fact is related on one side to sensation, and on the other to morals. The game of thought is, on the appearance of one of these two sides, to find the other: given the upper, to find the under side. Nothing so thin but has these two faces, and when the observer has seen the obverse, he turns it over to see the reverse.[1] Life is a pitching of this penny,—heads or tails. We never tire of this game, because there is still a slight shudder of astonishment at the exhibition of the other face, at the contrast of the two faces. A man is flushed with success, and bethinks himself what this good luck signifies. He drives his bargain in the street; but it occurs that he also is bought and sold. He sees the beauty of a human face, and searches the cause of that beauty, which must be more beautiful. He builds his fortunes, maintains the laws, cherishes his children; but he asks himself, Why? and whereto? This head and this tail are called, in the language of philosophy, Infinite and Finite; Relative and Absolute; Apparent and Real; and many fine names beside.

Each man is born with a predisposition to one or the other of these sides of nature; and it will easily happen that men will be found devoted to one or the other. One class has the perception of difference, and is conversant with facts and surfaces, cities and persons, and the bringing certain things to pass; — the men of talent and action. Another class have the perception of identity, and are men of faith and philosophy, men of genius.[1]

Each of these riders drives too fast. Plotinus believes only in philosophers; Fenelon, in saints; Pindar and Byron, in poets. Read the haughty language in which Plato and the Platonists speak of all men who are not devoted to their own shining abstractions: other men are rats and mice. The literary class is usually proud and exclusive. The correspondence of Pope and Swift describes mankind around them as monsters; and that of Goethe and Schiller, in our own time, is scarcely more kind.[2]

It is easy to see how this arrogance comes. The genius is a genius by the first look he casts on any object. Is his eye creative? Does he not rest in angles and colors, but beholds the design? — he will presently undervalue the actual object. In powerful moments, his thought has

dissolved the works of art and nature into their causes, so that the works appear heavy and faulty. He has a conception of beauty which the sculptor cannot embody. Picture, statue, temple, railroad, steam-engine, existed first in an artist's mind, without flaw, mistake, or friction, which impair the executed models.[1] So did the Church, the State, college, court, social circle, and all the institutions. It is not strange that these men, remembering what they have seen and hoped of ideas, should affirm disdainfully the superiority of ideas. Having at some time seen that the happy soul will carry all the arts in power, they say, Why cumber ourselves with superfluous realizations? and like dreaming beggars they assume to speak and act as if these values were already substantiated.

On the other part, the men of toil and trade and luxury, — the animal world, including the animal in the philosopher and poet also, and the practical world, including the painful drudgeries which are never excused to philosopher or poet any more than to the rest, — weigh heavily on the other side. The trade in our streets believes in no metaphysical causes, thinks nothing of the force which necessitated traders and a trading planet to exist: no, but sticks to cotton, sugar,

wool and salt. The ward meetings, on election days, are not softened by any misgiving of the value of these ballotings.[1] Hot life is streaming in a single direction. To the men of this world, to the animal strength and spirits, to the men of practical power, whilst immersed in it, the man of ideas appears out of his reason. They alone have reason.

Things always bring their own philosophy with them, that is, prudence. No man acquires property without acquiring with it a little arithmetic also. In England, the richest country that ever existed, property stands for more, compared with personal ability, than in any other. After dinner, a man believes less, denies more: verities have lost some charm. After dinner, arithmetic is the only science: ideas are disturbing, incendiary, follies of young men, repudiated by the solid portion of society: and a man comes to be valued by his athletic and animal qualities. Spence relates that Mr. Pope was with Sir Godfrey Kneller one day, when his nephew, a Guinea trader, came in. "Nephew," said Sir Godfrey, "you have the honor of seeing the two greatest men in the world." "I don't know how great men you may be," said the Guinea man, "but I don't like your looks. I have often bought a

man much better than both of you, all muscles and bones, for ten guineas." Thus the men of the senses revenge themselves on the professors and repay scorn for scorn. The first had leaped to conclusions not yet ripe, and say more than is true; the others make themselves merry with the philosopher, and weigh man by the pound. They believe that mustard bites the tongue, that pepper is hot, friction-matches incendiary, revolvers are to be avoided, and suspenders hold up pantaloons; that there is much sentiment in a chest of tea; and a man will be eloquent, if you give him good wine. Are you tender and scrupulous, — you must eat more mince-pie. They hold that Luther had milk in him when he said, —

> "Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weiber, Gesang,
> Der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang;" —

and when he advised a young scholar, perplexed with fore-ordination and free-will, to get well drunk. "The nerves," says Cabanis, "they are the man." My neighbor, a jolly farmer, in the tavern bar-room, thinks that the use of money is sure and speedy spending. For his part, he says, he puts his down his neck and gets the good of it.

The inconvenience of this way of thinking is

that it runs into indifferentism and then into disgust. Life is eating us up. We shall be fables presently. Keep cool: it will be all one a hundred years hence. Life 's well enough, but we shall be glad to get out of it, and they will all be glad to have us. Why should we fret and drudge? Our meat will taste to-morrow as it did yesterday, and we may at last have had enough of it. "Ah," said my languid gentleman at Oxford, "there 's nothing new or true,—and no matter."

With a little more bitterness, the cynic moans; our life is like an ass led to market by a bundle of hay being carried before him; he sees nothing but the bundle of hay. "There is so much trouble in coming into the world," said Lord Bolingbroke, "and so much more, as well as meanness, in going out of it, that 't is hardly worth while to be here at all." I knew a philosopher of this kidney who was accustomed briefly to sum up his experience of human nature in saying, "Mankind is a damned rascal:" ' and the natural corollary is pretty sure to follow,—'The world lives by humbug, and so will I.'

The abstractionist and the materialist thus mutually exasperating each other, and the scoffer expressing the worst of materialism, there arises

a third party to occupy the middle ground between these two, the skeptic, namely. He finds both wrong by being in extremes. He labors to plant his feet, to be the beam of the balance. He will not go beyond his card. He sees the one-sidedness of these men of the street; he will not be a Gibeonite; he stands for the intellectual faculties, a cool head and whatever serves to keep it cool; no unadvised industry, no unrewarded self-devotion, no loss of the brains in toil. Am I an ox, or a dray?—You are both in extremes, he says. You that will have all solid, and a world of pig-lead, deceive yourselves grossly. You believe yourselves rooted and grounded on adamant; and yet, if we uncover the last facts of our knowledge, you are spinning like bubbles in a river, you know not whither or whence, and you are bottomed and capped and wrapped in delusions.[1] Neither will he be betrayed to a book and wrapped in a gown.[2] The studious class are their own victims; they are thin and pale, their feet are cold, their heads are hot, the night is without sleep, the day a fear of interruption,—pallor, squalor, hunger and egotism. If you come near them and see what conceits they entertain,—they are abstractionists, and spend their days and nights in dreaming some dream;

in expecting the homage of society to some precious scheme, built on a truth, but destitute of proportion in its presentment, of justness in its application, and of all energy of will in the schemer to embody and vitalize it.'

But I see plainly, he says, that I cannot see. I know that human strength is not in extremes, but in avoiding extremes. I, at least, will shun the weakness of philosophizing beyond my depth. What is the use of pretending to powers we have not? What is the use of pretending to assurances we have not, respecting the other life? Why exaggerate the power of virtue? Why be an angel before your time? These strings, wound up too high, will snap. If there is a wish for immortality, and no evidence, why not say just that? If there are conflicting evidences, why not state them? If there is not ground for a candid thinker to make up his mind, yea or nay, — why not suspend the judgment? I weary of these dogmatizers. I tire of these hacks of routine, who deny the dogmas. I neither affirm nor deny. I stand here to try the case. I am here to consider, σκοπεῖν, to consider how it is. I will try to keep the balance true. Of what use to take the chair and glibly rattle off theories of society, reli-

gion and nature, when I know that practical objections lie in the way, insurmountable by me and by my mates? Why so talkative in public, when each of my neighbors can pin me to my seat by arguments I cannot refute? Why pretend that life is so simple a game, when we know how subtle and elusive the Proteus is?[1] Why think to shut up all things in your narrow coop, when we know there are not one or two only, but ten, twenty, a thousand things, and unlike? Why fancy that you have all the truth in your keeping? There is much to say on all sides.

Who shall forbid a wise skepticism, seeing that there is no practical question on which any thing more than an approximate solution can be had? Is not marriage an open question, when it is alleged, from the beginning of the world, that such as are in the institution wish to get out, and such as are out wish to get in? And the reply of Socrates, to him who asked whether he should choose a wife, still remains reasonable, that "whether he should choose one or not, he would repent it." Is not the State a question? All society is divided in opinion on the subject of the State. Nobody loves it; great numbers dislike it and suffer conscientious scruples to

allegiance; and the only defence set up, is the fear of doing worse in disorganizing. Is it otherwise with the Church? Or, to put any of the questions which touch mankind nearest,—shall the young man aim at a leading part in law, in politics, in trade? It will not be pretended that a success in either of these kinds is quite coincident with what is best and inmost in his mind. Shall he then, cutting the stays that hold him fast to the social state, put out to sea with no guidance but his genius? There is much to say on both sides. Remember the open question between the present order of "competition" and the friends of "attractive and associated labor." The generous minds embrace the proposition of labor shared by all; it is the only honesty; nothing else is safe.[1] It is from the poor man's hut alone that strength and virtue come: and yet, on the other side, it is alleged that labor impairs the form and breaks the spirit of man, and the laborers cry unanimously, 'We have no thoughts.' Culture, how indispensable! I cannot forgive you the want of accomplishments; and yet culture will instantly impair that chiefest beauty of spontaneousness. Excellent is culture for a savage; but once let him read in the book, and he is no longer able not

to think of Plutarch's heroes. In short, since true fortitude of understanding consists "in not letting what we know be embarrassed by what we do not know," we ought to secure those advantages which we can command, and not risk them by clutching after the airy and unattainable. Come, no chimeras! Let us go abroad; let us mix in affairs; let us learn and get and have and climb. "Men are a sort of moving plants, and, like trees, receive a great part of their nourishment from the air. If they keep too much at home, they pine." Let us have a robust, manly life; let us know what we know, for certain; what we have, let it be solid and seasonable and our own. A world in the hand is worth two in the bush. Let us have to do with real men and women, and not with skipping ghosts.

This then is the right ground of the skeptic, — this of consideration, of self-containing; not at all of unbelief; not at all of universal denying, nor of universal doubting, — doubting even that he doubts; least of all of scoffing and profligate jeering at all that is stable and good. These are no more his moods than are those of religion and philosophy. He is the considerer, the prudent, taking in sail, counting stock, hus-

banding his means, believing that a man has too many enemies than that he can afford to be his own foe; that we cannot give ourselves too many advantages in this unequal conflict, with powers so vast and unweariable ranged on one side, and this little conceited vulnerable popinjay that a man is, bobbing up and down into every danger, on the other. It is a position taken up for better defence, as of more safety, and one that can be maintained; and it is one of more opportunity and range: as, when we build a house, the rule is to set it not too high nor too low, under the wind, but out of the dirt.

The philosophy we want is one of fluxions and mobility. The Spartan and Stoic schemes are too stark and stiff for our occasion. A theory of Saint John, and of non-resistance, seems, on the other hand, too thin and aerial. We want some coat woven of elastic steel, stout as the first and limber as the second. We want a ship in these billows we inhabit. An angular, dogmatic house would be rent to chips and splinters in this storm of many elements. No, it must be tight, and fit to the form of man, to live at all; as a shell must dictate the architecture of a house founded on the sea. The soul of man must be the type of our scheme, just as the body

of man is the type after which a dwelling-house is built. Adaptiveness is the peculiarity of human nature. We are golden averages, volitant stabilities, compensated or periodic errors, houses founded on the sea. The wise skeptic wishes to have a near view of the best game and the chief players; what is best in the planet; art and nature, places and events; but mainly men. Every thing that is excellent in mankind, — a form of grace, an arm of iron, lips of persuasion, a brain of resources, every one skilful to play and win, — he will see and judge.

The terms of admission to this spectacle are, that he have a certain solid and intelligible way of living of his own; some method of answering the inevitable needs of human life; proof that he has played with skill and success; that he has evinced the temper, stoutness and the range of qualities which, among his contemporaries and countrymen, entitle him to fellowship and trust. For the secrets of life are not shown except to sympathy and likeness. Men do not confide themselves to boys, or coxcombs, or pedants, but to their peers. Some wise limitation, as the modern phrase is; some condition between the extremes, and having, itself, a positive quality; some stark and sufficient man, who

is not salt or sugar, but sufficiently related to the world to do justice to Paris or London, and, at the same time, a vigorous and original thinker, whom cities can not overawe, but who uses them, — is the fit person to occupy this ground of speculation.

These qualities meet in the character of Montaigne. And yet, since the personal regard which I entertain for Montaigne may be unduly great, I will, under the shield of this prince of egotists, offer, as an apology for electing him as the representative of skepticism, a word or two to explain how my love began and grew for this admirable gossip.[1]

A single odd volume of Cotton's translation of the Essays remained to me from my father's library, when a boy. It lay long neglected, until, after many years, when I was newly escaped from college, I read the book, and procured the remaining volumes. I remember the delight and wonder in which I lived with it. It seemed to me as if I had myself written the book, in some former life, so sincerely it spoke to my thought and experience. It happened, when in Paris, in 1833, that, in the cemetery of Père Lachaise, I came to a tomb of Auguste Collignon, who died in 1830, aged sixty-eight years, and who, said

the monument, "lived to do right, and had formed himself to virtue on the Essays of Montaigne." Some years later, I became acquainted with an accomplished English poet, John Sterling;[1] and, in prosecuting my correspondence, I found that, from a love of Montaigne, he had made a pilgrimage to his chateau, still standing near Castellan, in Périgord, and, after two hundred and fifty years, had copied from the walls of his library the inscriptions which Montaigne had written there. That Journal of Mr. Sterling's, published in the Westminster Review, Mr. Hazlitt has reprinted in the *Prolegomena* to his edition of the Essays. I heard with pleasure that one of the newly-discovered autographs of William Shakspeare was in a copy of Florio's translation of Montaigne. It is the only book which we certainly know to have been in the poet's library. And, oddly enough, the duplicate copy of Florio, which the British Museum purchased with a view of protecting the Shakspeare autograph (as I was informed in the Museum), turned out to have the autograph of Ben Jonson in the fly-leaf. Leigh Hunt relates of Lord Byron, that Montaigne was the only great writer of past times whom he read with avowed satisfaction. Other coincidences, not

needful to be mentioned here, concurred to make this old Gascon still new and immortal for me.

In 1571, on the death of his father, Montaigne, then thirty-eight years old, retired from the practice of law at Bordeaux, and settled himself on his estate. Though he had been a man of pleasure and sometimes a courtier, his studious habits now grew on him, and he loved the compass, staidness and independence of the country gentleman's life. He took up his economy in good earnest, and made his farms yield the most. Downright and plain-dealing, and abhorring to be deceived or to deceive, he was esteemed in the country for his sense and probity. In the civil wars of the League, which converted every house into a fort, Montaigne kept his gates open and his house without defence. All parties freely came and went, his courage and honor being universally esteemed. The neighboring lords and gentry brought jewels and papers to him for safe-keeping. Gibbon reckons, in these bigoted times, but two men of liberality in France, — Henry IV. and Montaigne.

Montaigne is the frankest and honestest of all writers. His French freedom runs into grossness; but he has anticipated all censure by the bounty of his own confessions. In his times,

books were written to one sex only, and almost all were written in Latin; so that in a humorist a certain nakedness of statement was permitted, which our manners, of a literature addressed equally to both sexes, do not allow. But though a biblical plainness coupled with a most uncanonical levity may shut his pages to many sensitive readers, yet the offence is superficial. He parades it: he makes the most of it: nobody can think or say worse of him than he does.' He pretends to most of the vices; and, if there be any virtue in him, he says, it got in by stealth. There is no man, in his opinion, who has not deserved hanging five or six times; and he pretends no exception in his own behalf. "Five or six as ridiculous stories," too, he says, "can be told of me, as of any man living." But, with all this really superfluous frankness, the opinion of an invincible probity grows into every reader's mind. "When I the most strictly and religiously confess myself, I find that the best virtue I have has in it some tincture of vice; and I, who am as sincere and perfect a lover of virtue of that stamp as any other whatever, am afraid that Plato, in his purest virtue, if he had listened and laid his ear close to himself, would have heard some jarring sound of human mixture; but

faint and remote and only to be perceived by himself."

Here is an impatience and fastidiousness at color or pretence of any kind. He has been in courts so long as to have conceived a furious disgust at appearances; he will indulge himself with a little cursing and swearing; he will talk with sailors and gipsies, use flash and street ballads; he has stayed in-doors till he is deadly sick; he will to the open air, though it rain bullets. He has seen too much of gentlemen of the long robe, until he wishes for cannibals; and is so nervous, by factitious life, that he thinks the more barbarous man is, the better he is. He likes his saddle. You may read theology, and grammar, and metaphysics elsewhere. Whatever you get here shall smack of the earth and of real life, sweet, or smart, or stinging. He makes no hesitation to entertain you with the records of his disease, and his journey to Italy is quite full of that matter.[1] He took and kept this position of equilibrium. Over his name he drew an emblematic pair of scales, and wrote *Que sçais je?* under it. As I look at his effigy opposite the title-page, I seem to hear him say, 'You may play old Poz, if you will;[2] you may rail and exaggerate, — I stand here for truth, and will not, for all the states

and churches and revenues and personal reputations of Europe, overstate the dry fact, as I see it; I will rather mumble and prose about what I certainly know, — my house and barns; my father, my wife and my tenants; my old lean bald pate; my knives and forks; what meats I eat and what drinks I prefer, and a hundred straws just as ridiculous, — than I will write, with a fine crow-quill, a fine romance. I like gray days, and autumn and winter weather. I am gray and autumnal myself, and think an undress and old shoes that do not pinch my feet, and old friends who do not constrain me, and plain topics where I do not need to strain myself and pump my brains, the most suitable. Our condition as men is risky and ticklish enough. One cannot be sure of himself and his fortune an hour, but he may be whisked off into some pitiable or ridiculous plight. Why should I vapor and play the philosopher, instead of ballasting, the best I can, this dancing balloon? So, at least, I live within compass, keep myself ready for action, and can shoot the gulf at last with decency. If there be anything farcical in such a life, the blame is not mine: let it lie at fate's and nature's door.'

The Essays, therefore, are an entertaining

soliloquy on every random topic that comes into his head; treating every thing without ceremony, yet with masculine sense. There have been men with deeper insight; but, one would say, never a man with such abundance of thoughts: he is never dull, never insincere, and has the genius to make the reader care for all that he cares for.

The sincerity and marrow of the man reaches to his sentences. I know not anywhere the book that seems less written. It is the language of conversation transferred to a book. Cut these words, and they would bleed; they are vascular and alive. One has the same pleasure in it that he feels in listening to the necessary speech of men about their work, when any unusual circumstance gives momentary importance to the dialogue. For blacksmiths and teamsters do not trip in their speech; it is a shower of bullets. It is Cambridge men who correct themselves and begin again at every half sentence, and, moreover, will pun, and refine too much, and swerve from the matter to the expression.[1] Montaigne talks with shrewdness, knows the world and books and himself, and uses the positive degree; never shrieks, or protests, or prays: no weakness, no convulsion, no superlative: does not wish to jump out of his skin, or play any antics, or an-

nihilate space or time, but is stout and solid; tastes every moment of the day; likes pain because it makes him feel himself and realize things; as we pinch ourselves to know that we are awake. He keeps the plain; he rarely mounts or sinks; likes to feel solid ground and the stones underneath. His writing has no enthusiasms, no aspiration; contented, self-respecting and keeping the middle of the road. There is but one exception, — in his love for Socrates. In speaking of him, for once his cheek flushes and his style rises to passion.

Montaigne died of a quinsy, at the age of sixty, in 1592. When he came to die he caused the mass to be celebrated in his chamber. At the age of thirty-three, he had been married. "But," he says, "might I have had my own will, I would not have married Wisdom herself, if she would have had me: but 't is to much purpose to evade it, the common custom and use of life will have it so. Most of my actions are guided by example, not choice." In the hour of death, he gave the same weight to custom. *Que sçais je?* What do I know?

This book of Montaigne the world has endorsed by translating it into all tongues and printing seventy-five editions of it in Europe:

and that, too, a circulation somewhat chosen, namely among courtiers, soldiers, princes, men of the world and men of wit and generosity.

Shall we say that Montaigne has spoken wisely, and given the right and permanent expression of the human mind, on the conduct of life?

We are natural believers. Truth, or the connection between cause and effect, alone interests us. We are persuaded that a thread runs through all things: all worlds are strung on it, as beads; and men, and events, and life, come to us only because of that thread: they pass and repass only that we may know the direction and continuity of that line. A book or statement which goes to show that there is no line, but random and chaos, a calamity out of nothing, a prosperity and no account of it, a hero born from a fool, a fool from a hero, — dispirits us. Seen or unseen, we believe the tie exists. Talent makes counterfeit ties; genius finds the real ones. We hearken to the man of science, because we anticipate the sequence in natural phenomena which he uncovers. We love whatever affirms, connects, preserves; and dislike what scatters or pulls down. One man appears whose

nature is to all men's eyes conserving and constructive; his presence supposes a well-ordered society, agriculture, trade, large institutions and empire. If these did not exist, they would begin to exist through his endeavors. Therefore he cheers and comforts men, who feel all this in him very readily. The nonconformist and the rebel say all manner of unanswerable things against the existing republic, but discover to our sense no plan of house or state of their own. Therefore, though the town and state and way of living, which our counsellor contemplated, might be a very modest or musty prosperity, yet men rightly go for him, and reject the reformer so long as he comes only with axe and crowbar.

But though we are natural conservers and causationists, and reject a sour, dumpish unbelief, the skeptical class, which Montaigne represents, have reason, and every man, at some time, belongs to it. Every superior mind will pass through this domain of equilibration, — I should rather say, will know how to avail himself of the checks and balances in nature, as a natural weapon against the exaggeration and formalism of bigots and blockheads.

Skepticism is the attitude assumed by the

student in relation to the particulars which society adores, but which he sees to be reverend only in their tendency and spirit. The ground occupied by the skeptic is the vestibule of the temple. Society does not like to have any breath of question blown on the existing order. But the interrogation of custom at all points is an inevitable stage in the growth of every superior mind, and is the evidence of its perception of the flowing power which remains itself in all changes.[1]

The superior mind will find itself equally at odds with the evils of society and with the projects that are offered to relieve them. The wise skeptic is a bad citizen; no conservative, he sees the selfishness of property and the drowsiness of institutions. But neither is he fit to work with any democratic party that ever was constituted; for parties wish every one committed, and he penetrates the popular patriotism. His politics are those of the "Soul's Errand" of Sir Walter Raleigh; or of Krishna, in the Bhagavat, "There is none who is worthy of my love or hatred;" whilst he sentences law, physic, divinity, commerce and custom. He is a reformer; yet he is no better member of the philanthropic association. It turns out that he

is not the champion of the operative, the pauper, the prisoner, the slave. It stands in his mind that our life in this world is not of quite so easy interpretation as churches and schoolbooks say. He does not wish to take ground against these benevolences, to play the part of devil's attorney, and blazon every doubt and sneer that darkens the sun for him. But he says, There are doubts.

I mean to use the occasion, and celebrate the calendar-day of our Saint Michel de Montaigne, by counting and describing these doubts or negations. I wish to ferret them out of their holes and sun them a little. We must do with them as the police do with old rogues, who are shown up to the public at the marshal's office. They will never be so formidable when once they have been identified and registered. But I mean honestly by them, — that justice shall be done to their terrors. I shall not take Sunday objections, made up on purpose to be put down. I shall take the worst I can find, whether I can dispose of them or they of me.

I do not press the skepticism of the materialist. I know the quadruped opinion will not prevail. 'T is of no importance what bats and oxen think. The first dangerous symptom I report

is, the levity of intellect; as if it were fatal to earnestness to know much. Knowledge is the knowing that we can not know. The dull pray; the geniuses are light mockers. How respectable is earnestness on every platform! but intellect kills it. Nay, San Carlo, my subtle and admirable friend, one of the most penetrating of men, finds that all direct ascension, even of lofty piety, leads to this ghastly insight and sends back the votary orphaned.[1] My astonishing San Carlo thought the lawgivers and saints infected. They found the ark empty; saw, and would not tell; and tried to choke off their approaching followers, by saying, 'Action, action, my dear fellows, is for you!' Bad as was to me this detection by San Carlo, this frost in July, this blow from a bride, there was still a worse, namely the cloy or satiety of the saints. In the mount of vision, ere they have yet risen from their knees, they say, 'We discover that this our homage and beatitude is partial and deformed: we must fly for relief to the suspected and reviled Intellect, to the Understanding, the Mephistopheles, to the gymnastics of talent.'[2]

This is hobgoblin the first; and though it has been the subject of much elegy in our nineteenth century, from Byron, Goethe and other poets

of less fame, not to mention many distinguished private observers, — I confess it is not very affecting to my imagination; for it seems to concern the shattering of baby-houses and crockery-shops. What flutters the Church of Rome, or of England, or of Geneva, or of Boston, may yet be very far from touching any principle of faith. I think that the intellect and moral sentiment are unanimous; and that though philosophy extirpates bugbears, yet it supplies the natural checks of vice, and polarity to the soul. I think that the wiser a man is, the more stupendous he finds the natural and moral economy, and lifts himself to a more absolute reliance.'

There is the power of moods, each setting at nought all but its own tissue of facts and beliefs. There is the power of complexions, obviously modifying the dispositions and sentiments. The beliefs and unbeliefs appear to be structural; and as soon as each man attains the poise and vivacity which allow the whole machinery to play, he will not need extreme examples, but will rapidly alternate all opinions in his own life. Our life is March weather, savage and serene in one hour. We go forth austere, dedicated, believing in the iron links of Destiny, and will not turn on our heel to save our life: but a book,

or a bust, or only the sound of a name, shoots a spark through the nerves, and we suddenly believe in will: my finger-ring shall be the seal of Solomon; fate is for imbeciles; all is possible to the resolved mind. Presently a new experience gives a new turn to our thoughts: common sense resumes its tyranny; we say, 'Well, the army, after all, is the gate to fame, manners and poetry: and, look you, — on the whole, selfishness plants best, prunes best, makes the best commerce and the best citizen.' Are the opinions of a man on right and wrong, on fate and causation, at the mercy of a broken sleep or an indigestion? Is his belief in God and Duty no deeper than a stomach evidence? And what guaranty for the permanence of his opinions? I like not the French celerity, — a new Church and State once a week. This is the second negation; and I shall let it pass for what it will. As far as it asserts rotation of states of mind, I suppose it suggests its own remedy, namely in the record of larger periods. What is the mean of many states; of all the states? Does the general voice of ages affirm any principle, or is no community of sentiment discoverable in distant times and places? And when it shows the power of self-interest, I accept that as part of

the divine law and must reconcile it with aspiration the best I can.

The word Fate, or Destiny, expresses the sense of mankind, in all ages, that the laws of the world do not always befriend, but often hurt and crush us. Fate, in the shape of *Kinde* or nature, grows over us like grass.[1] We paint Time with a scythe; Love and Fortune, blind; and Destiny, deaf. We have too little power of resistance against this ferocity which champs us up. What front can we make against these unavoidable, victorious, maleficent forces? What can I do against the influence of Race, in my history? What can I do against hereditary and constitutional habits; against scrofula, lymph, impotence? against climate, against barbarism, in my country? I can reason down or deny every thing, except this perpetual Belly: feed he must and will, and I cannot make him respectable.[2]

But the main resistance which the affirmative impulse finds, and one including all others, is in the doctrine of the Illusionists. There is a painful rumor in circulation that we have been practised upon in all the principal performances of life, and free agency is the emptiest name. We

have been sopped and drugged with the air, with food, with woman, with children, with sciences, with events, which leave us exactly where they found us. The mathematics, 't is complained, leave the mind where they find it: so do all sciences; and so do all events and actions. I find a man who has passed through all the sciences, the churl he was; and, through all the offices, learned, civil and social, can detect the child. We are not the less necessitated to dedicate life to them. In fact we may come to accept it as the fixed rule and theory of our state of education, that God is a substance, and his method is illusion. The Eastern sages owned the goddess Yoganidra, the great illusory energy of Vishnu, by whom, as utter ignorance, the whole world is beguiled.

Or shall I state it thus? — The astonishment of life is the absence of any appearance of reconciliation between the theory and practice of life. Reason, the prized reality, the Law, is apprehended, now and then, for a serene and profound moment amidst the hubbub of cares and works which have no direct bearing on it; — is then lost for months or years, and again found for an interval, to be lost again. If we compute it in time, we may, in fifty years, have half a dozen

reasonable hours. But what are these cares and works the better? A method in the world we do not see, but this parallelism of great and little, which never react on each other, nor discover the smallest tendency to converge. Experiences, fortunes, governings, readings, writings, are nothing to the purpose; as when a man comes into the room it does not appear whether he has been fed on yams or buffalo, — he has contrived to get so much bone and fibre as he wants, out of rice or out of snow. So vast is the disproportion between the sky of law and the pismire of performance under it, that whether he is a man of worth or a sot is not so great a matter as we say. Shall I add, as one juggle of this enchantment, the stunning non-intercourse law which makes co-operation impossible? The young spirit pants to enter society. But all the ways of culture and greatness lead to solitary imprisonment. He has been often baulked. He did not expect a sympathy with his thought from the village, but he went with it to the chosen and intelligent, and found no entertainment for it, but mere misapprehension, distaste and scoffing. Men are strangely mistimed and misapplied; and the excellence of each is an inflamed individualism which separates him more

There are these, and more than these diseases of thought, which our ordinary teachers do not attempt to remove. Now shall we, because a good nature inclines us to virtue's side, say, There are no doubts, — and lie for the right? Is life to be led in a brave or in a cowardly manner? and is not the satisfaction of the doubts essential to all manliness? Is the name of virtue to be a barrier to that which is virtue? Can you not believe that a man of earnest and burly habit may find small good in tea, essays and catechism, and want a rougher instruction, want men, labor, trade, farming, war, hunger, plenty, love, hatred, doubt and terror to make things plain to him; and has he not a right to insist on being convinced in his own way? When he is convinced, he will be worth the pains.'

Belief consists in accepting the affirmations of the soul; unbelief, in denying them. Some minds are incapable of skepticism. The doubts they profess to entertain are rather a civility or accommodation to the common discourse of their company. They may well give themselves leave to speculate, for they are secure of a return. Once admitted to the heaven of thought, they see no relapse into night, but infinite invi-

tation on the other side. Heaven is within heaven, and sky over sky, and they are encompassed with divinities. Others there are to whom the heaven is brass, and it shuts down to the surface of the earth. It is a question of temperament, or of more or less immersion in nature. The last class must needs have a reflex or parasite faith; not a sight of realities, but an instinctive reliance on the seers and believers of realities. The manners and thoughts of believers astonish them and convince them that these have seen something which is hid from themselves. But their sensual habit would fix the believer to his last position, whilst he as inevitably advances; and presently the unbeliever, for love of belief, burns the believer.

Great believers are always reckoned infidels, impracticable, fantastic, atheistic, and really men of no account. The spiritualist finds himself driven to express his faith by a series of skepticisms. Charitable souls come with their projects and ask his co-operation. How can he hesitate? It is the rule of mere comity and courtesy to agree where you can, and to turn your sentence with something auspicious, and not freezing and sinister. But he is forced to say, 'O, these things will be as they must be: what can you do?

These particular griefs and crimes are the foliage and fruit of such trees as we see growing. It is vain to complain of the leaf or the berry; cut it off, it will bear another just as bad. You must begin your cure lower down.' The generosities of the day prove an intractable element for him. The people's questions are not his; their methods are not his; and against all the dictates of good nature he is driven to say he has no pleasure in them.[1]

Even the doctrines dear to the hope of man, of the divine Providence and of the immortality of the soul, his neighbors can not put the statement so that he shall affirm it. But he denies out of more faith, and not less. He denies out of honesty. He had rather stand charged with the imbecility of skepticism, than with untruth. I believe, he says, in the moral design of the universe; it exists hospitably for the weal of souls; but your dogmas seem to me caricatures: why should I make believe them? Will any say, This is cold and infidel? The wise and magnanimous will not say so. They will exult in his far-sighted good-will that can abandon to the adversary all the ground of tradition and common belief, without losing a jot of strength. It sees to the end of all transgression. George

Fox saw that there was "an ocean of darkness and death; but withal an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over that of darkness."[1]

The final solution in which skepticism is lost, is in the moral sentiment, which never forfeits its supremacy. All moods may be safely tried, and their weight allowed to all objections: the moral sentiment as easily outweighs them all, as any one. This is the drop which balances the sea. I play with the miscellany of facts, and take those superficial views which we call skepticism; but I know that they will presently appear to me in that order which makes skepticism impossible. A man of thought must feel the thought that is parent of the universe; that the masses of nature do undulate and flow.

This faith avails to the whole emergency of life and objects. The world is saturated with deity and with law. He is content with just and unjust, with sots and fools, with the triumph of folly and fraud.[2] He can behold with serenity the yawning gulf between the ambition of man and his power of performance, between the demand and supply of power, which makes the tragedy of all souls.

Charles Fourier announced that "the attractions of man are proportioned to his destinies;"

in other words, that every desire predicts its own satisfaction. Yet all experience exhibits the reverse of this; the incompetency of power is the universal grief of young and ardent minds. They accuse the divine Providence of a certain parsimony. It has shown the heaven and earth to every child and filled him with a desire for the whole; a desire raging, infinite; a hunger, as of space to be filled with planets; a cry of famine, as of devils for souls. Then for the satisfaction, — to each man is administered a single drop, a bead of dew of vital power, *per day*, — a cup as large as space, and one drop of the water of life in it.[1] Each man woke in the morning with an appetite that could eat the solar system like a cake; a spirit for action and passion without bounds; he could lay his hand on the morning star; he could try conclusions with gravitation or chemistry; but, on the first motion to prove his strength, — hands, feet, senses, gave way and would not serve him. He was an emperor deserted by his states, and left to whistle by himself, or thrust into a mob of emperors, all whistling: and still the sirens sang, "The attractions are proportioned to the destinies." In every house, in the heart of each maiden and of each boy, in the soul of the soaring saint, this chasm

is found, — between the largest promise of ideal power, and the shabby experience.

The expansive nature of truth comes to our succor, elastic, not to be surrounded. Man helps himself by larger generalizations. The lesson of life is practically to generalize; to believe what the years and the centuries say, against the hours; to resist the usurpation of particulars; to penetrate to their catholic sense. Things seem to say one thing, and say the reverse. The appearance is immoral; the result is moral. Things seem to tend downward, to justify despondency, to promote rogues, to defeat the just; and by knaves as by martyrs the just cause is carried forward. Although knaves win in every political struggle, although society seems to be delivered over from the hands of one set of criminals into the hands of another set of criminals, as fast as the government is changed, and the march of civilization is a train of felonies, — yet, general ends are somehow answered. We see, now, events forced on which seem to retard or retrograde the civility of ages. But the world-spirit is a good swimmer, and storms and waves cannot drown him. He snaps his finger at laws: and so, throughout history, heaven seems to affect low and poor means. Through the years

and the centuries, through evil agents, through toys and atoms, a great and beneficent tendency irresistibly streams.[1]

Let a man learn to look for the permanent in the mutable and fleeting; let him learn to bear the disappearance of things he was wont to reverence without losing his reverence; let him learn that he is here, not to work but to be worked upon; and that, though abyss open under abyss, and opinion displace opinion, all are at last contained in the Eternal Cause: —

"If my bark sink, 't is to another sea."[2]

V

SHAKSPEARE; OR, THE POET

SHAKSPEARE; OR, THE POET

GREAT men are more distinguished by range and extent than by originality. If we require the originality which consists in weaving, like a spider, their web from their own bowels; in finding clay and making bricks and building the house; no great men are original. Nor does valuable originality consist in unlikeness to other men. The hero is in the press of knights and the thick of events; and seeing what men want and sharing their desire, he adds the needful length of sight and of arm, to come at the desired point. The greatest genius is the most indebted man. A poet is no rattle-brain, saying what comes uppermost, and, because he says every thing, saying at last something good; but a heart in unison with his time and country. There is nothing whimsical and fantastic in his production, but sweet and sad earnest, freighted with the weightiest convictions and pointed with the most determined aim which any man or class knows of in his times.'

The Genius of our life is jealous of individuals, and will not have any individual great,

except through the general. There is no choice to genius. A great man does not wake up on some fine morning and say, 'I am full of life, I will go to sea and find an Antarctic continent: to-day I will square the circle: I will ransack botany and find a new food for man: I have a new architecture in my mind: I foresee a new mechanic power:' no, but he finds himself in the river of the thoughts and events, forced onward by the ideas and necessities of his contemporaries.[1] He stands where all the eyes of men look one way, and their hands all point in the direction in which he should go. The Church has reared him amidst rites and pomps, and he carries out the advice which her music gave him, and builds a cathedral needed by her chants and processions. He finds a war raging: it educates him, by trumpet, in barracks, and he betters the instruction. He finds two counties groping to bring coal, or flour, or fish, from the place of production to the place of consumption, and he hits on a railroad. Every master has found his materials collected, and his power lay in his sympathy with his people and in his love of the materials he wrought in. What an economy of power! and what a compensation for the shortness of life! All is done to his hand. The world

has brought him thus far on his way. The human race has gone out before him, sunk the hills, filled the hollows and bridged the rivers. Men, nations, poets, artisans, women, all have worked for him, and he enters into their labors. Choose any other thing, out of the line of tendency, out of the national feeling and history, and he would have all to do for himself: his powers would be expended in the first preparations. Great genial power, one would almost say, consists in not being original at all; in being altogether receptive; in letting the world do all, and suffering the spirit of the hour to pass unobstructed through the mind.[1]

Shakspeare's youth fell in a time when the English people were importunate for dramatic entertainments. The court took offence easily at political allusions and attempted to suppress them. The Puritans, a growing and energetic party, and the religious among the Anglican church, would suppress them. But the people wanted them. Inn-yards, houses without roofs, and extemporaneous enclosures at country fairs were the ready theatres of strolling players. The people had tasted this new joy; and, as we could not hope to suppress newspapers now, — no, not by the strongest party, — neither then

could king, prelate, or puritan, alone or united, suppress an organ which was ballad, epic, newspaper, caucus, lecture, Punch and library, at the same time. Probably king, prelate and puritan, all found their own account in it. It had become, by all causes, a national interest, — by no means conspicuous, so that some great scholar would have thought of treating it in an English history, — but not a whit less considerable because it was cheap and of no account, like a baker's-shop. The best proof of its vitality is the crowd of writers which suddenly broke into this field; Kyd, Marlow, Greene, Jonson, Chapman, Dekker, Webster, Heywood, Middleton, Peele, Ford, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher.

The secure possession, by the stage, of the public mind, is of the first importance to the poet who works for it.[1] He loses no time in idle experiments. Here is audience and expectation prepared. In the case of Shakspeare there is much more. At the time when he left Stratford and went up to London, a great body of stage-plays of all dates and writers existed in manuscript and were in turn produced on the boards. Here is the Tale of Troy, which the audience will bear hearing some part of, every week: the Death of Julius Cæsar, and other

stories out of Plutarch, which they never tire of; a shelf full of English history, from the chronicles of Brut and Arthur, down to the royal Henries, which men hear eagerly; and a string of doleful tragedies, merry Italian tales and Spanish voyages, which all the London 'prentices know. All the mass has been treated, with more or less skill, by every playwright, and the prompter has the soiled and tattered manuscripts. It is now no longer possible to say who wrote them first. They have been the property of the Theatre so long, and so many rising geniuses have enlarged or altered them, inserting a speech or a whole scene, or adding a song, that no man can any longer claim copyright in this work of numbers. Happily, no man wishes to. They are not yet desired in that way. We have few readers, many spectators and hearers. They had best lie where they are.

Shakspeare, in common with his comrades, esteemed the mass of old plays waste stock, in which any experiment could be freely tried. Had the *prestige* which hedges about a modern tragedy existed, nothing could have been done. The rude warm blood of the living England circulated in the play, as in street-ballads,

and gave body which he wanted to his airy and majestic fancy. The poet needs a ground in popular tradition on which he may work, and which, again, may restrain his art within the due temperance. It holds him to the people, supplies a foundation for his edifice, and in furnishing so much work done to his hand, leaves him at leisure and in full strength for the audacities of his imagination. In short, the poet owes to his legend what sculpture owed to the temple. Sculpture in Egypt and in Greece grew up in subordination to architecture. It was the ornament of the temple wall: at first a rude relief carved on pediments, then the relief became bolder and a head or arm was projected from the wall; the groups being still arranged with reference to the building, which serves also as a frame to hold the figures; and when at last the greatest freedom of style and treatment was reached, the prevailing genius of architecture still enforced a certain calmness and continence in the statue. As soon as the statue was begun for itself, and with no reference to the temple or palace, the art began to decline: freak, extravagance and exhibition took the place of the old temperance. This balance-wheel, which the sculptor found in architecture, the perilous irri-

tability of poetic talent found in the accumulated dramatic materials to which the people were already wonted, and which had a certain excellence which no single genius, however extraordinary, could hope to create.

In point of fact it appears that Shakspeare did owe debts in all directions, and was able to use whatever he found; and the amount of indebtedness may be inferred from Malone's laborious computations in regard to the First, Second and Third parts of Henry VI., in which, "out of 6043 lines, 1771 were written by some author preceding Shakspeare, 2373 by him, on the foundation laid by his predecessors, and 1899 were entirely his own." And the proceeding investigation hardly leaves a single drama of his absolute invention. Malone's sentence is an important piece of external history. In Henry VIII. I think I see plainly the cropping out of the original rock on which his own finer stratum was laid. The first play was written by a superior, thoughtful man, with a vicious ear. I can mark his lines, and know well their cadence. See Wolsey's soliloquy, and the following scene with Cromwell, where instead of the metre of Shakspeare, whose secret is that the thought constructs the tune, so that reading for

the sense will best bring out the rhythm, — here the lines are constructed on a given tune, and the verse has even a trace of pulpit eloquence. But the play contains through all its length unmistakable traits of Shakspeare's hand, and some passages, as the account of the coronation, are like autographs. What is odd, the compliment to Queen Elizabeth is in the bad rhythm.[1]

Shakspeare knew that tradition supplies a better fable than any invention can. If he lost any credit of design, he augmented his resources; and, at that day, our petulant demand for originality was not so much pressed. There was no literature for the million. The universal reading, the cheap press, were unknown. A great poet who appears in illiterate times, absorbs into his sphere all the light which is any where radiating. Every intellectual jewel, every flower of sentiment it is his fine office to bring to his people; and he comes to value his memory equally with his invention.[2] He is therefore little solicitous whence his thoughts have been derived; whether through translation, whether through tradition, whether by travel in distant countries, whether by inspiration; from whatever source, they are equally welcome to his

uncritical audience. Nay, he borrows very near home. Other men say wise things as well as he; only they say a good many foolish things, and do not know when they have spoken wisely. He knows the sparkle of the true stone, and puts it in high place, wherever he finds it.[1] Such is the happy position of Homer perhaps; of Chaucer, of Saadi. They felt that all wit was their wit. And they are librarians and historiographers, as well as poets. Each romancer was heir and dispenser of all the hundred tales of the world, —

> "Presenting Thebes' and Pelops' line
> And the tale of Troy divine." [2]

The influence of Chaucer is conspicuous in all our early literature; and more recently not only Pope and Dryden have been beholden to him, but, in the whole society of English writers, a large unacknowledged debt is easily traced. One is charmed with the opulence which feeds so many pensioners. But Chaucer is a huge borrower. Chaucer, it seems, drew continually, through Lydgate and Caxton, from Guido di Colonna, whose Latin romance of the Trojan war was in turn a compilation from Dares Phrygius, Ovid and Statius. Then Petrarch, Boccaccio and the Provençal poets are his benefac-

tors: the Romaunt of the Rose is only judicious translation from William of Lorris and John of Meung: Troilus and Creseide, from Lollius of Urbino: The Cock and the Fox, from the *Lais* of Marie: The House of Fame, from the French or Italian: and poor Gower he uses as if he were only a brick-kiln or stone-quarry out of which to build his house.[1] He steals by this apology, — that what he takes has no worth where he finds it and the greatest where he leaves it. It has come to be practically a sort of rule in literature, that a man having once shown himself capable of original writing, is entitled thenceforth to steal from the writings of others at discretion. Thought is the property of him who can entertain it and of him who can adequately place it. A certain awkwardness marks the use of borrowed thoughts; but as soon as we have learned what to do with them they become our own.

Thus all originality is relative. Every thinker is retrospective. The learned member of the legislature, at Westminster or at Washington, speaks and votes for thousands. Show us the constituency, and the now invisible channels by which the senator is made aware of their wishes; the crowd of practical and knowing men, who, by correspondence or conversation, are feeding

him with evidence, anecdotes and estimates, and it will bereave his fine attitude and resistance of something of their impressiveness. As Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Webster vote, so Locke and Rousseau think, for thousands; and so there were fountains all around Homer,[1] Menu, Saadi, or Milton, from which they drew; friends, lovers, books, traditions, proverbs, — all perished — which, if seen, would go to reduce the wonder. Did the bard speak with authority? Did he feel himself overmatched by any companion? The appeal is to the consciousness of the writer. Is there at last in his breast a Delphi whereof to ask concerning any thought or thing, whether it be verily so, yea or nay? and to have answer, and to rely on that? All the debts which such a man could contract to other wit would never disturb his consciousness of originality; for the ministrations of books and of other minds are a whiff of smoke to that most private reality with which he has conversed.[2]

It is easy to see that what is best written or done by genius in the world, was no man's work, but came by wide social labor, when a thousand wrought like one, sharing the same impulse. Our English Bible is a wonderful specimen of the strength and music of the English language. But

it was not made by one man, or at one time; but centuries and churches brought it to perfection. There never was a time when there was not some translation existing. The Liturgy, admired for its energy and pathos, is an anthology of the piety of ages and nations, a translation of the prayers and forms of the Catholic church, — these collected, too, in long periods, from the prayers and meditations of every saint and sacred writer all over the world.[1] Grotius makes the like remark in respect to the Lord's Prayer, that the single clauses of which it is composed were already in use in the time of Christ, in the Rabbinical forms. He picked out the grains of gold. The nervous language of the Common Law, the impressive forms of our courts and the precision and substantial truth of the legal distinctions, are the contribution of all the sharp-sighted, strong-minded men who have lived in the countries where these laws govern. The translation of Plutarch gets its excellence by being translation on translation. There never was a time when there was none. All the truly idiomatic and national phrases are kept, and all others successively picked out and thrown away. Something like the same process had gone on, long before, with the originals of these books. The

world takes liberties with world-books. Vedas, Æsop's Fables, Pilpay, Arabian Nights, Cid, Iliad, Robin Hood, Scottish Minstrelsy, are not the work of single men. In the composition of such works the time thinks, the market thinks, the mason, the carpenter, the merchant, the farmer, the fop, all think for us. Every book supplies its time with one good word; every municipal law, every trade, every folly of the day; and the generic catholic genius who is not afraid or ashamed to owe his originality to the originality of all, stands with the next age as the recorder and embodiment of his own.[1]

We have to thank the researches of antiquaries, and the Shakspeare Society, for ascertaining the steps of the English drama, from the Mysteries celebrated in churches and by churchmen, and the final detachment from the church, and the completion of secular plays, from Ferrex and Porrex,[2] and Gammer Gurton's Needle, down to the possession of the stage by the very pieces which Shakspeare altered, remodelled and finally made his own. Elated with success and piqued by the growing interest of the problem, they have left no bookstall unsearched, no chest in a garret unopened, no file of old yellow accounts to decompose in damp and worms, so

keen was the hope to discover whether the boy Shakspeare poached or not, whether he held horses at the theatre door, whether he kept school, and why he left in his will only his second-best bed to Ann Hathaway, his wife.

There is somewhat touching in the madness with which the passing age mischooses the object on which all candles shine and all eyes are turned; the care with which it registers every trifle touching Queen Elizabeth and King James, and the Essexes, Leicesters, Burleighs and Buckinghams; and lets pass without a single valuable note the founder of another dynasty, which alone will cause the Tudor dynasty to be remembered, — the man who carries the Saxon race in him by the inspiration which feeds him, and on whose thoughts the foremost people of the world are now for some ages to be nourished, and minds to receive this and not another bias. A popular player; — nobody suspected he was the poet of the human race; and the secret was kept as faithfully from poets and intellectual men as from courtiers and frivolous people.[1] Bacon, who took the inventory of the human understanding for his times, never mentioned his name. Ben Jonson, though we have strained his few words of regard and panegyric, had no suspicion of the

elastic fame whose first vibrations he was attempting. He no doubt thought the praise he has conceded to him generous, and esteemed himself, out of all question, the better poet of the two.

If it need wit to know wit, according to the proverb, Shakspeare's time should be capable of recognizing it. Sir Henry Wotton was born four years after Shakspeare, and died twenty-three years after him; and I find, among his correspondents and acquaintances, the following persons: Theodore Beza, Isaac Casaubon, Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Essex, Lord Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, John Milton, Sir Henry Vane, Isaac Walton, Dr. Donne, Abraham Cowley, Bellarmine, Charles Cotton, John Pym, John Hales, Kepler, Vieta, Albericus Gentilis, Paul Sarpi, Arminius; with all of whom exists some token of his having communicated, without enumerating many others whom doubtless he saw, — Shakspeare, Spenser, Jonson, Beaumont, Massinger, the two Herberts, Marlow, Chapman and the rest. Since the constellation of great men who appeared in Greece in the time of Pericles, there was never any such society; — yet their genius failed them to find out the best head in the universe.[1] Our poet's mask was impenetrable. You cannot see the mountain near

It took a century to make it suspected; and not until two centuries had passed, after his death, did any criticism which we think adequate begin to appear. It was not possible to write the history of Shakspeare till now; for he is the father of German literature: it was with the introduction of Shakspeare into German, by Lessing, and the translation of his works by Wieland and Schlegel, that the rapid burst of German literature was most intimately connected. It was not until the nineteenth century, whose speculative genius is a sort of living Hamlet, that the tragedy of Hamlet could find such wondering readers.' Now, literature, philosophy and thought are Shakspearized. His mind is the horizon beyond which, at present, we do not see. Our ears are educated to music by his rhythm. Coleridge and Goethe are the only critics who have expressed our convictions with any adequate fidelity: but there is in all cultivated minds a silent appreciation of his superlative power and beauty, which, like Christianity, qualifies the period.

The Shakspeare Society have inquired in all directions, advertised the missing facts, offered money for any information that will lead to proof, — and with what result? Beside some important illustration of the history of the Eng-

lish stage, to which I have adverted, they have gleaned a few facts touching the property, and dealings in regard to property, of the poet. It appears that from year to year he owned a larger share in the Blackfriars' Theatre: its wardrobe and other appurtenances were his: that he bought an estate in his native village with his earnings as writer and shareholder; that he lived in the best house in Stratford; was intrusted by his neighbors with their commissions in London, as of borrowing money, and the like; that he was a veritable farmer. About the time when he was writing Macbeth, he sues Philip Rogers, in the borough-court of Stratford, for thirty-five shillings, ten pence, for corn delivered to him at different times; and in all respects appears as a good husband, with no reputation for eccentricity or excess. He was a good-natured sort of man, an actor and shareholder in the theatre, not in any striking manner distinguished from other actors and managers.[1] I admit the importance of this information. It was well worth the pains that have been taken to procure it.

But whatever scraps of information concerning his condition these researches may have rescued, they can shed no light upon that infinite invention which is the concealed magnet of his

attraction for us. We are very clumsy writers of history. We tell the chronicle of parentage, birth, birth-place, schooling, school-mates, earning of money, marriage, publication of books, celebrity, death; and when we have come to an end of this gossip, no ray of relation appears between it and the goddess-born; and it seems as if, had we dipped at random into the "Modern Plutarch," and read any other life there, it would have fitted the poems as well.[1] It is the essence of poetry to spring, like the rainbow daughter of Wonder, from the invisible, to abolish the past and refuse all history. Malone, Warburton, Dyce and Collier have wasted their oil. The famed theatres, Covent Garden, Drury Lane, the Park and Tremont have vainly assisted. Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Kean and Macready dedicate their lives to this genius; him they crown, elucidate, obey and express. The genius knows them not. The recitation begins; one golden word leaps out immortal from all this painted pedantry and sweetly torments us with invitations to its own inaccessible homes. I remember I went once to see the Hamlet of a famed performer, the pride of the English stage; and all I then heard and all I now remember of the tragedian was that in which

the tragedian had no part; simply Hamlet's question to the ghost: —

> "What may this mean,
> That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
> Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon?"

That imagination which dilates the closet he writes in to the world's dimension, crowds it with agents in rank and order, as quickly reduces the big reality to be the glimpses of the moon.[1] These tricks of his magic spoil for us the illusions of the green-room. Can any biography shed light on the localities into which the Midsummer Night's Dream admits me? Did Shakspeare confide to any notary or parish recorder, sacristan, or surrogate in Stratford, the genesis of that delicate creation? The forest of Arden, the nimble air of Scone Castle, the moonlight of Portia's villa, "the antres vast and desarts idle" of Othello's captivity, — where is the third cousin, or grand-nephew, the chancellor's file of accounts, or private letter, that has kept one word of those transcendent secrets? In fine, in this drama, as in all great works of art, — in the Cyclopæan architecture of Egypt and India, in the Phidian sculpture, the Gothic minsters, the Italian painting, the Ballads of Spain and Scotland, — the Genius

draws up the ladder after him, when the creative age goes up to heaven, and gives way to a new age, which sees the works and asks in vain for a history.

Shakspeare is the only biographer of Shakspeare; and even he can tell nothing, except to the Shakspeare in us, that is, to our most apprehensive and sympathetic hour.' He cannot step from off his tripod and give us anecdotes of his inspirations. Read the antique documents extricated, analyzed and compared by the assiduous Dyce and Collier, and now read one of these skyey sentences, — aerolites, — which seem to have fallen out of heaven, and which not your experience but the man within the breast has accepted as words of fate, and tell me if they match; if the former account in any manner for the latter; or which gives the most historical insight into the man.

Hence, though our external history is so meagre, yet, with Shakspeare for biographer, instead of Aubrey and Rowe, we have really the information which is material; that which describes character and fortune, that which, if we were about to meet the man and deal with him, would most import us to know. We have his recorded convictions on those questions which

knock for answer at every heart, — on life and death, on love, on wealth and poverty, on the prizes of life and the ways whereby we come at them; on the characters of men, and the influences, occult and open, which affect their fortunes; and on those mysterious and demoniacal powers which defy our science and which yet interweave their malice and their gift in our brightest hours. Who ever read the volume of the Sonnets without finding that the poet had there revealed, under masks that are no masks to the intelligent, the lore of friendship and of love; the confusion of sentiments in the most susceptible, and, at the same time, the most intellectual of men? What trait of his private mind has he hidden in his dramas? One can discern, in his ample pictures of the gentleman and the king, what forms and humanities pleased him; his delight in troops of friends, in large hospitality, in cheerful giving. Let Timon, let Warwick, let Antonio the merchant answer for his great heart. So far from Shakspeare's being the least known, he is the one person, in all modern history, known to us. What point of morals, of manners, of economy, of philosophy, of religion, of taste, of the conduct of life, has he not settled? What mystery has he not signified his

knowledge of? What office, or function, or district of man's work, has he not remembered? What king has he not taught state, as Talma taught Napoleon? What maiden has not found him finer than her delicacy? What lover has he not outloved? What sage has he not outseen? What gentleman has he not instructed in the rudeness of his behavior?

Some able and appreciating critics think no criticism on Shakspeare valuable that does not rest purely on the dramatic merit; that he is falsely judged as poet and philosopher. I think as highly as these critics of his dramatic merit, but still think it secondary. He was a full man, who liked to talk; a brain exhaling thoughts and images, which, seeking vent, found the drama next at hand.[1] Had he been less, we should have had to consider how well he filled his place, how good a dramatist he was, — and he is the best in the world. But it turns out that what he has to say is of that weight as to withdraw some attention from the vehicle; and he is like some saint whose history is to be rendered into all languages, into verse and prose, into songs and pictures, and cut up into proverbs; so that the occasion which gave the saint's meaning the form of a conversation, or of a prayer, or of a code of

laws, is immaterial compared with the universality of its application. So it fares with the wise Shakspeare and his book of life. He wrote the airs for all our modern music: he wrote the text of modern life; the text of manners: he drew the man of England and Europe; the father of the man in America;[1] he drew the man, and described the day, and what is done in it: he read the hearts of men and women, their probity, and their second thought and wiles; the wiles of innocence, and the transitions by which virtues and vices slide into their contraries: he could divide the mother's part from the father's part in the face of the child, or draw the fine demarcations of freedom and of fate: he knew the laws of repression which make the police of nature: and all the sweets and all the terrors of human lot lay in his mind as truly but as softly as the landscape lies on the eye. And the importance of this wisdom of life sinks the form, as of Drama or Epic, out of notice. 'T is like making a question concerning the paper on which a king's message is written.

Shakspeare is as much out of the category of eminent authors, as he is out of the crowd. He is inconceivably wise; the others, conceivably. A good reader can, in a sort, nestle into Plato's

brain and think from thence; but not into Shakspeare's. We are still out of doors. For executive faculty, for creation, Shakspeare is unique. No man can imagine it better. He was the farthest reach of subtlety compatible with an individual self, — the subtilest of authors, and only just within the possibility of authorship.[1] With this wisdom of life is the equal endowment of imaginative and of lyric power. He clothed the creatures of his legend with form and sentiments as if they were people who had lived under his roof; and few real men have left such distinct characters as these fictions. And they spoke in language as sweet as it was fit. Yet his talents never seduced him into an ostentation, nor did he harp on one string. An omnipresent humanity co-ordinates all his faculties. Give a man of talents a story to tell, and his partiality will presently appear. He has certain observations, opinions, topics, which have some accidental prominence, and which he disposes all to exhibit. He crams this part and starves that other part, consulting not the fitness of the thing, but his fitness and strength. But Shakspeare has no peculiarity, no importunate topic; but all is duly given; no veins, no curiosities; no cow-painter, no bird-fancier, no mannerist is he: he has no

discoverable egotism: the great he tells greatly; the small subordinately. He is wise without emphasis or assertion; he is strong, as nature is strong, who lifts the land into mountain slopes without effort and by the same rule as she floats a bubble in the air, and likes as well to do the one as the other. This makes that equality of power in farce, tragedy, narrative, and love-songs; a merit so incessant that each reader is incredulous of the perception of other readers.

This power of expression, or of transferring the inmost truth of things into music and verse, makes him the type of the poet and has added a new problem to metaphysics. This is that which throws him into natural history, as a main production of the globe, and as announcing new eras and ameliorations. Things were mirrored in his poetry without loss or blur: he could paint the fine with precision, the great with compass, the tragic and the comic indifferently and without any distortion or favor. He carried his powerful execution into minute details, to a hair point; finishes an eyelash or a dimple as firmly as he draws a mountain; and yet these, like nature's, will bear the scrutiny of the solar microscope.

In short, he is the chief example to prove

that more or less of production, more or fewer pictures, is a thing indifferent. He had the power to make one picture. Daguerre learned how to let one flower etch its image on his plate of iodine, and then proceeds at leisure to etch a million. There are always objects ; but there was never representation. Here is perfect representation, at last ; and now let the world of figures sit for their portraits. No recipe can be given for the making of a Shakspeare ; but the possibility of the translation of things into song is demonstrated.

His lyric power lies in the genius of the piece. The sonnets, though their excellence is lost in the splendor of the dramas, are as inimitable as they ; and it is not a merit of lines, but a total merit of the piece ; like the tone of voice of some incomparable person, so is this a speech of poetic beings, and any clause as unproducible now as a whole poem.

Though the speeches in the plays, and single lines, have a beauty which tempts the ear to pause on them for their euphuism, yet the sentence is so loaded with meaning and so linked with its foregoers and followers, that the logician is satisfied. His means are as admirable as his ends ; every subordinate invention, by which he

helps himself to connect some irreconcilable opposites, is a poem too. He is not reduced to dismount and walk because his horses are running off with him in some distant direction: he always rides.

The finest poetry was first experience; but the thought has suffered a transformation since it was an experience. Cultivated men often attain a good degree of skill in writing verses; but it is easy to read, through their poems, their personal history: any one acquainted with the parties can name every figure; this is Andrew and that is Rachel. The sense thus remains prosaic. It is a caterpillar with wings, and not yet a butterfly. In the poet's mind the fact has gone quite over into the new element of thought, and has lost all that is exuvial. This generosity abides with Shakspeare. We say, from the truth and closeness of his pictures, that he knows the lesson by heart. Yet there is not a trace of egotism.

One more royal trait properly belongs to the poet. I mean his cheerfulness, without which no man can be a poet, — for beauty is his aim. He loves virtue, not for its obligation but for its grace: he delights in the world, in man, in woman, for the lovely light that sparkles from them. Beauty, the spirit of joy and hilarity, he

sheds over the universe. Epicurus relates that poetry hath such charms that a lover might forsake his mistress to partake of them. And the true bards have been noted for their firm and cheerful temper. Homer lies in sunshine; Chaucer is glad and erect; and Saadi says, "It was rumored abroad that I was penitent; but what had I to do with repentance?"[1] Not less sovereign and cheerful, — much more sovereign and cheerful, is the tone of Shakspeare. His name suggests joy and emancipation to the heart of men. If he should appear in any company of human souls, who would not march in his troop? He touches nothing that does not borrow health and longevity from his festal style.

And now, how stands the account of man with this bard and benefactor, when, in solitude, shutting our ears to the reverberations of his fame, we seek to strike the balance? Solitude has austere lessons; it can teach us to spare both heroes and poets; and it weighs Shakspeare also, and finds him to share the halfness and imperfection of humanity.

Shakspeare, Homer, Dante, Chaucer, saw the splendor of meaning that plays over the visible world; knew that a tree had another use than

for apples, and corn another than for meal, and the ball of the earth, than for tillage and roads: that these things bore a second and finer harvest to the mind, being emblems of its thoughts, and conveying in all their natural history a certain mute commentary on human life.[1] Shakspeare employed them as colors to compose his picture. He rested in their beauty; and never took the step which seemed inevitable to such genius, namely to explore the virtue which resides in these symbols and imparts this power: — what is that which they themselves say? He converted the elements which waited on his command, into entertainments. He was master of the revels to mankind. Is it not as if one should have, through majestic powers of science, the comets given into his hand, or the planets and their moons, and should draw them from their orbits to glare with the municipal fireworks on a holiday night, and advertise in all towns, "Very superior pyrotechny this evening"? Are the agents of nature, and the power to understand them, worth no more than a street serenade, or the breath of a cigar? One remembers again the trumpet-text in the Koran, — "The heavens and the earth and all that is between them, think ye we have created them

in jest?" As long as the question is of talent and mental power, the world of men has not his equal to show. But when the question is, to life and its materials and its auxiliaries, how does he profit me? What does it signify? It is but a Twelfth Night, or Midsummer-Night's Dream, or Winter Evening's Tale: what signifies another picture more or less? The Egyptian verdict of the Shakspeare Societies comes to mind; that he was a jovial actor and manager. I can not marry this fact to his verse. Other admirable men have led lives in some sort of keeping with their thought; but this man, in wide contrast. Had he been less, had he reached only the common measure of great authors, of Bacon, Milton, Tasso, Cervantes, we might leave the fact in the twilight of human fate: but that this man of men, he who gave to the science of mind a new and larger subject than had ever existed, and planted the standard of humanity some furlongs forward into Chaos, — that he should not be wise for himself; — it must even go into the world's history that the best poet led an obscure and profane life, using his genius for the public amusement.[1]

Well, other men, priest and prophet, Israelite, German and Swede, beheld the same objects:

they also saw through them that which was contained. And to what purpose? The beauty straightway vanished; they read commandments, all-excluding mountainous duty; an obligation, a sadness, as of piled mountains, fell on them, and life became ghastly, joyless, a pilgrim's progress, a probation, beleaguered round with doleful histories of Adam's fall and curse behind us; with doomsdays and purgatorial and penal fires before us; and the heart of the seer and the heart of the listener sank in them.

It must be conceded that these are half-views of half-men. The world still wants its poet-priest, a reconciler, who shall not trifle, with Shakspeare the player, nor shall grope in graves, with Swedenborg the mourner; but who shall see, speak, and act, with equal inspiration. For knowledge will brighten the sunshine; right is more beautiful than private affection; and love is compatible with universal wisdom.[1]

VI

NAPOLEON; OR, THE MAN OF THE WORLD

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AMONG the eminent persons of the nineteenth century, Bonaparte is far the best known and the most powerful; and owes his predominance to the fidelity with which he expresses the tone of thought and belief, the aims of the masses of active and cultivated men. It is Swedenborg's theory that every organ is made up of homogeneous particles; or as it is sometimes expressed, every whole is made of similars; that is, the lungs are composed of infinitely small lungs; the liver, of infinitely small livers; the kidney, of little kidneys,[1] etc. Following this analogy, if any man is found to carry with him the power and affections of vast numbers, if Napoleon is France, if Napoleon is Europe, it is because the people whom he sways are little Napoleons.

In our society there is a standing antagonism between the conservative and the democratic classes; between those who have made their fortunes, and the young and the poor who have fortunes to make; between the interests of dead labor, — that is, the labor of hands long ago

still in the grave, which labor is now entombed in money stocks, or in land and buildings owned by idle capitalists, — and the interests of living labor, which seeks to possess itself of land and buildings and money stocks. The first class is timid, selfish, illiberal, hating innovation, and continually losing numbers by death. The second class is selfish also, encroaching, bold, self-relying, always outnumbering the other and recruiting its numbers every hour by births. It desires to keep open every avenue to the competition of all, and to multiply avenues: the class of business men in America, in England, in France and throughout Europe; the class of industry and skill. Napoleon is its representative. The instinct of active, brave, able men, throughout the middle class every where, has pointed out Napoleon as the incarnate Democrat. He had their virtues and their vices; above all, he had their spirit or aim. That tendency is material, pointing at a sensual success and employing the richest and most various means to that end; conversant with mechanical powers, highly intellectual, widely and accurately learned and skilful, but subordinating all intellectual and spiritual forces into means to a material success. To be the rich man, is the end. "God has

granted," says the Koran, "to every people a prophet in its own tongue." Paris and London and New York, the spirit of commerce, of money and material power, were also to have their prophet; and Bonaparte was qualified and sent.

Every one of the million readers of anecdotes or memoirs or lives of Napoleon, delights in the page, because he studies in it his own history.[1] Napoleon is thoroughly modern, and, at the highest point of his fortunes, has the very spirit of the newspapers. He is no saint, — to use his own word, "no capuchin," and he is no hero, in the high sense. The man in the street finds in him the qualities and powers of other men in the street. He finds him, like himself, by birth a citizen, who, by very intelligible merits, arrived at such a commanding position that he could indulge all those tastes which the common man possesses but is obliged to conceal and deny: good society, good books, fast travelling, dress, dinners, servants without number, personal weight, the execution of his ideas, the standing in the attitude of a benefactor to all persons about him, the refined enjoyments of pictures, statues, music, palaces and conventional honors, — precisely what is agreeable to

the heart of every man in the nineteenth century, this powerful man possessed.

It is true that a man of Napoleon's truth of adaptation to the mind of the masses around him, becomes not merely representative but actually a monopolizer and usurper of other minds. Thus Mirabeau plagiarized every good thought, every good word that was spoken in France. Dumont relates that he sat in the gallery of the Convention and heard Mirabeau make a speech. It struck Dumont that he could fit it with a peroration, which he wrote in pencil immediately, and showed it to Lord Elgin, who sat by him. Lord Elgin approved it, and Dumont, in the evening, showed it to Mirabeau. Mirabeau read it, pronounced it admirable, and declared he would incorporate it into his harangue to-morrow, to the Assembly. "It is impossible," said Dumont, "as, unfortunately, I have shown it to Lord Elgin." "If you have shown it to Lord Elgin and to fifty persons beside, I shall still speak it to-morrow:" and he did speak it, with much effect, at the next day's session. For Mirabeau, with his overpowering personality, felt that these things which his presence inspired were as much his own as if he had said them, and that his adoption of them gave

them their weight. Much more absolute and centralizing was the successor to Mirabeau's popularity and to much more than his predominance in France. Indeed, a man of Napoleon's stamp almost ceases to have a private speech and opinion. He is so largely receptive, and is so placed, that he comes to be a bureau for all the intelligence, wit and power of the age and country. He gains the battle; he makes the code; he makes the system of weights and measures; he levels the Alps; he builds the road. All distinguished engineers, savans, statists, report to him: so likewise do all good heads in every kind: he adopts the best measures, sets his stamp on them, and not these alone, but on every happy and memorable expression. Every sentence spoken by Napoleon and every line of his writing, deserves reading, as it is the sense of France.

Bonaparte was the idol of common men because he had in transcendent degree the qualities and powers of common men. There is a certain satisfaction in coming down to the lowest ground of politics, for we get rid of cant and hypocrisy. Bonaparte wrought, in common with that great class he represented, for power and wealth, — but Bonaparte, specially, without any scruple as

to the means. All the sentiments which embarrass men's pursuit of these objects, he set aside. The sentiments were for women and children. Fontanes, in 1804, expressed Napoleon's own sense, when in behalf of the Senate he addressed him, — "Sire, the desire of perfection is the worst disease that ever afflicted the human mind." The advocates of liberty and of progress are "ideologists;" — a word of contempt often in his mouth; — "Necker is an ideologist:" "Lafayette is an ideologist."[1]

An Italian proverb, too well known, declares that "if you would succeed, you must not be too good." It is an advantage, within certain limits, to have renounced the dominion of the sentiments of piety, gratitude and generosity; since what was an impassable bar to us, and still is to others, becomes a convenient weapon for our purposes; just as the river which was a formidable barrier, winter transforms into the smoothest of roads.

Napoleon renounced, once for all, sentiments and affections, and would help himself with his hands and his head. With him is no miracle and no magic. He is a worker in brass, in iron, in wood, in earth, in roads, in buildings, in money and in troops, and a very consistent and wise

master-workman. He is never weak and literary, but acts with the solidity and the precision of natural agents. He has not lost his native sense and sympathy with things.' Men give way before such a man, as before natural events. To be sure there are men enough who are immersed in things, as farmers, smiths, sailors and mechanics generally; and we know how real and solid such men appear in the presence of scholars and grammarians: but these men ordinarily lack the power of arrangement, and are like hands without a head. But Bonaparte superadded to this mineral and animal force, insight and generalization, so that men saw in him combined the natural and the intellectual power, as if the sea and land had taken flesh and begun to cipher. Therefore the land and sea seem to presuppose him. He came unto his own and they received him. This ciphering operative knows what he is working with and what is the product. He knew the properties of gold and iron, of wheels and ships, of troops and diplomatists, and required that each should do after its kind.

The art of war was the game in which he exerted his arithmetic. It consisted, according to him, in having always more forces than the enemy, on the point where the enemy is

attacked, or where he attacks: and his whole talent is strained by endless manœuvre and evolution, to march always on the enemy at an angle, and destroy his forces in detail. It is obvious that a very small force, skilfully and rapidly manœuvring so as always to bring two men against one at the point of engagement, will be an overmatch for a much larger body of men.

The times, his constitution and his early circumstances combined to develop this pattern democrat. He had the virtues of his class and the conditions for their activity. That common-sense which no sooner respects any end than it finds the means to effect it; the delight in the use of means; in the choice, simplification and combining of means; the directness and thoroughness of his work; the prudence with which all was seen and the energy with which all was done, make him the natural organ and head of what I may almost call, from its extent, the *modern* party.[1]

Nature must have far the greatest share in every success, and so in his. Such a man was wanted, and such a man was born; a man of stone and iron, capable of sitting on horseback sixteen or seventeen hours, of going many days

together without rest or food except by snatches, and with the speed and spring of a tiger in action; a man not embarrassed by any scruples; compact, instant, selfish, prudent, and of a perception which did not suffer itself to be baulked or misled by any pretences of others, or any superstition or any heat or haste of his own.[1] "My hand of iron," he said, "was not at the extremity of my arm, it was immediately connected with my head." He respected the power of nature and fortune, and ascribed to it his superiority, instead of valuing himself, like inferior men, on his opinionativeness, and waging war with nature. His favorite rhetoric lay in allusion to his star; and he pleased himself, as well as the people, when he styled himself the "Child of Destiny."[2] "They charge me," he said, "with the commission of great crimes: men of my stamp do not commit crimes. Nothing has been more simple than my elevation, 't is in vain to ascribe it to intrigue or crime; it was owing to the peculiarity of the times and to my reputation of having fought well against the enemies of my country. I have always marched with the opinion of great masses and with events. Of what use then would crimes be to me?" Again he said, speaking of his son, "My son can not

replace me; I could not replace myself. I am the creature of circumstances."

He had a directness of action never before combined with so much comprehension. He is a realist, terrific to all talkers and confused truth-obscuring persons. He sees where the matter hinges, throws himself on the precise point of resistance, and slights all other considerations. He is strong in the right manner, namely by insight. He never blundered into victory, but won his battles in his head before he won them on the field. His principal means are in himself. He asks counsel of no other. In 1796 he writes to the Directory: "I have conducted the campaign without consulting any one. I should have done no good if I had been under the necessity of conforming to the notions of another person. I have gained some advantages over superior forces and when totally destitute of every thing, because, in the persuasion that your confidence was reposed in me, my actions were as prompt as my thoughts."

History is full, down to this day, of the imbecility of kings and governors. They are a class of persons much to be pitied, for they know not what they should do. The weavers strike for bread, and the king and his ministers, know-

ing not what to do, meet them with bayonets. But Napoleon understood his business. Here was a man who in each moment and emergency knew what to do next. It is an immense comfort and refreshment to the spirits, not only of kings, but of citizens. Few men have any next; they live from hand to mouth, without plan, and are ever at the end of their line, and after each action wait for an impulse from abroad. Napoleon had been the first man of the world, if his ends had been purely public. As he is, he inspires confidence and vigor by the extraordinary unity of his action. He is firm, sure, self-denying, self-postponing, sacrificing every thing, — money, troops, generals, and his own safety also, to his aim; not misled, like common adventurers, by the splendor of his own means. "Incidents ought not to govern policy," he said, "but policy, incidents." "To be hurried away by every event is to have no political system at all." His victories were only so many doors, and he never for a moment lost sight of his way onward, in the dazzle and uproar of the present circumstance. He knew what to do, and he flew to his mark. He would shorten a straight line to come at his object. Horrible anecdotes may no doubt be collected from his

history, of the price at which he bought his successes; but he must not therefore be set down as cruel, but only as one who knew no impediment to his will; not bloodthirsty, not cruel, — but woe to what thing or person stood in his way! Not bloodthirsty, but not sparing of blood, — and pitiless. He saw only the object: the obstacle must give way. "Sire, General Clarke can not combine with General Junot, for the dreadful fire of the Austrian battery." — "Let him carry the battery." — "Sire, every regiment that approaches the heavy artillery is sacrificed: Sire, what orders?" — "Forward, forward!" Seruzier, a colonel of artillery, gives, in his "Military Memoirs," the following sketch of a scene after the battle of Austerlitz. — "At the moment in which the Russian army was making its retreat, painfully, but in good order, on the ice of the lake, the Emperor Napoleon came riding at full speed toward the artillery. 'You are losing time,' he cried; 'fire upon those masses; they must be engulfed: fire upon the ice!' The order remained unexecuted for ten minutes. In vain several officers and myself were placed on the slope of a hill to produce the effect: their balls and mine rolled upon the ice without breaking it up. Seeing that, I tried a

simple method of elevating light howitzers. The almost perpendicular fall of the heavy projectiles produced the desired effect. My method was immediately followed by the adjoining batteries, and in less than no time we buried" some "thousands of Russians and Austrians under the waters of the lake." [1]

In the plenitude of his resources, every obstacle seemed to vanish. "There shall be no Alps," he said; and he built his perfect roads, climbing by graded galleries their steepest precipices, until Italy was as open to Paris as any town in France. He laid his bones to, and wrought for his crown. Having decided what was to be done, he did that with might and main. He put out all his strength. He risked every thing and spared nothing, neither ammunition, nor money, nor troops, nor generals, nor himself.

We like to see every thing do its office after its kind, whether it be a milch-cow or a rattlesnake; and if fighting be the best mode of adjusting national differences, (as large majorities of men seem to agree,) certainly Bonaparte was right in making it thorough. The grand principle of war, he said, was that an army ought always to be ready, by day and by night and at

all hours, to make all the resistance it is capable of making. He never economized his ammunition, but, on a hostile position, rained a torrent of iron, — shells, balls, grape-shot, — to annihilate all defence. On any point of resistance he concentrated squadron on squadron in overwhelming numbers until it was swept out of existence. To a regiment of horse-chasseurs at Lobenstein, two days before the battle of Jena, Napoleon said, "My lads, you must not fear death; when soldiers brave death, they drive him into the enemy's ranks." In the fury of assault, he no more spared himself. He went to the edge of his possibility. It is plain that in Italy he did what he could, and all that he could. He came, several times, within an inch of ruin; and his own person was all but lost. He was flung into the marsh at Arcola. The Austrians were between him and his troops, in the *mêlée*, and he was brought off with desperate efforts. At Lonato, and at other places, he was on the point of being taken prisoner. He fought sixty battles. He had never enough. Each victory was a new weapon. "My power would fall, were I not to support it by new achievements. Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me." He felt, with every wise

man, that as much life is needed for conservation as for creation. We are always in peril, always in a bad plight, just on the edge of destruction and only to be saved by invention and courage.

This vigor was guarded and tempered by the coldest prudence and punctuality. A thunderbolt in the attack, he was found invulnerable in his intrenchments. His very attack was never the inspiration of courage, but the result of calculation. His idea of the best defence consists in being still the attacking party. "My ambition," he says, "was great, but was of a cold nature." In one of his conversations with Las Cases, he remarked, "As to moral courage, I have rarely met with the two-o'clock-in-the-morning kind: I mean unprepared courage; that which is necessary on an unexpected occasion, and which, in spite of the most unforeseen events, leaves full freedom of judgment and decision:" and he did not hesitate to declare that he was himself eminently endowed with this two-o'clock-in-the-morning courage, and that he had met with few persons equal to himself in this respect.

Every thing depended on the nicety of his combinations, and the stars were not more

punctual than his arithmetic. His personal attention descended to the smallest particulars. "At Montebello, I ordered Kellermann to attack with eight hundred horse, and with these he separated the six thousand Hungarian grenadiers, before the very eyes of the Austrian cavalry. This cavalry was half a league off and required a quarter of an hour to arrive on the field of action, and I have observed that it is always these quarters of an hour that decide the fate of a battle." "Before he fought a battle, Bonaparte thought little about what he should do in case of success, but a great deal about what he should do in case of a reverse of fortune." The same prudence and good sense mark all his behavior. His instructions to his secretary at the Tuileries are worth remembering. "During the night, enter my chamber as seldom as possible. Do not awake me when you have any good news to communicate; with that there is no hurry. But when you bring bad news, rouse me instantly, for then there is not a moment to be lost." It was a whimsical economy of the same kind which dictated his practice, when general in Italy, in regard to his burdensome correspondence. He directed Bourrienne to leave all letters unopened for

three weeks, and then observed with satisfaction how large a part of the correspondence had thus disposed of itself and no longer required an answer. His achievement of business was immense, and enlarges the known powers of man. There have been many working kings, from Ulysses to William of Orange, but none who accomplished a tithe of this man's performance.

To these gifts of nature, Napoleon added the advantage of having been born to a private and humble fortune. In his later days he had the weakness of wishing to add to his crowns and badges the prescription of aristocracy; but he knew his debt to his austere education, and made no secret of his contempt for the born kings, and for "the hereditary asses," as he coarsely styled the Bourbons. He said that "in their exile they had learned nothing, and forgot nothing." Bonaparte had passed through all the degrees of military service, but also was citizen before he was emperor, and so has the key to citizenship. His remarks and estimates discover the information and justness of measurement of the middle class. Those who had to deal with him found that he was not to be imposed upon, but could cipher as well as an-

other man. This appears in all parts of his Memoirs, dictated at St. Helena. When the expenses of the empress, of his household, of his palaces, had accumulated great debts, Napoleon examined the bills of the creditors himself, detected overcharges and errors, and reduced the claims by considerable sums.

His grand weapon, namely the millions whom he directed, he owed to the representative character which clothed him. He interests us as he stands for France and for Europe; and he exists as captain and king only as far as the Revolution, or the interest of the industrious masses, found an organ and a leader in him. In the social interests, he knew the meaning and value of labor, and threw himself naturally on that side. I like an incident mentioned by one of his biographers at St. Helena. "When walking with Mrs. Balcombe, some servants, carrying heavy boxes, passed by on the road, and Mrs. Balcombe desired them, in rather an angry tone, to keep back. Napoleon interfered, saying 'Respect the burden, Madam.'"[1] In the time of the empire he directed attention to the improvement and embellishment of the markets of the capital. "The market-place," he said, "is the Louvre of the common people." The

principal works that have survived him are his magnificent roads. He filled the troops with his spirit, and a sort of freedom and companionship grew up between him and them, which the forms of his court never permitted between the officers and himself. They performed, under his eye, that which no others could do. The best document of his relation to his troops is the order of the day on the morning of the battle of Austerlitz, in which Napoleon promises the troops that he will keep his person out of reach of fire. This declaration, which is the reverse of that ordinarily made by generals and sovereigns on the eve of a battle, sufficiently explains the devotion of the army to their leader.

But though there is in particulars this identity between Napoleon and the mass of the people, his real strength lay in their conviction that he was their representative in his genius and aims, not only when he courted, but when he controlled, and even when he decimated them by his conscriptions. He knew, as well as any Jacobin in France, how to philosophize on liberty and equality; and when allusion was made to the precious blood of centuries, which was spilled by the killing of the Duc d'Enghien,

he suggested, "Neither is my blood ditch-water." The people felt that no longer the throne was occupied and the land sucked of its nourishment, by a small class of legitimates, secluded from all community with the children of the soil, and holding the ideas and superstitions of a long-forgotten state of society.[1] Instead of that vampyre, a man of themselves held, in the Tuileries, knowledge and ideas like their own, opening of course to them and their children all places of power and trust. The day of sleepy, selfish policy, ever narrowing the means and opportunities of young men, was ended, and a day of expansion and demand was come. A market for all the powers and productions of man was opened; brilliant prizes glittered in the eyes of youth and talent. The old, iron-bound, feudal France was changed into a young Ohio or New York; and those who smarted under the immediate rigors of the new monarch, pardoned them as the necessary severities of the military system which had driven out the oppressor. And even when the majority of the people had begun to ask whether they had really gained any thing under the exhausting levies of men and money of the new master, the whole talent of the country, in every rank

and kindred, took his part and defended him as its natural patron. In 1814, when advised to rely on the higher classes, Napoleon said to those around him, "Gentlemen, in the situation in which I stand, my only nobility is the rabble of the Faubourgs."

Napoleon met this natural expectation. The necessity of his position required a hospitality to every sort of talent, and its appointment to trusts; and his feeling went along with this policy. Like every superior person, he undoubtedly felt a desire for men and compeers, and a wish to measure his power with other masters, and an impatience of fools and underlings. In Italy, he sought for men and found none. "Good God!" he said, "how rare men are! There are eighteen millions in Italy, and I have with difficulty found two, — Dandolo and Melzi." In later years, with larger experience, his respect for mankind was not increased. In a moment of bitterness he said to one of his oldest friends, "Men deserve the contempt with which they inspire me. I have only to put some gold-lace on the coat of my virtuous republicans and they immediately become just what I wish them." This impatience at levity was, however, an oblique tribute of respect to those

able persons who commanded his regard not only when he found them friends and coadjutors but also when they resisted his will. He could not confound Fox and Pitt, Carnot, Lafayette and Bernadotte, with the danglers of his court; and in spite of the detraction which his systematic egotism dictated toward the great captains who conquered with and for him, ample acknowledgments are made by him to Lannes, Duroc, Kleber, Dessaix, Massena, Murat, Ney and Augereau. If he felt himself their patron and the founder of their fortunes, as when he said "I made my generals out of mud," — he could not hide his satisfaction in receiving from them a seconding and support commensurate with the grandeur of his enterprise. In the Russian campaign he was so much impressed by the courage and resources of Marshal Ney, that he said, "I have two hundred millions in my coffers, and I would give them all for Ney." The characters which he has drawn of several of his marshals are discriminating, and though they did not content the insatiable vanity of French officers, are no doubt substantially just. And in fact every species of merit was sought and advanced under his government. "I know," he said, "the depth and

draught of water of every one of my generals." Natural power was sure to be well received at his court. Seventeen men in his time were raised from common soldiers to the rank of king, marshal, duke, or general; and the crosses of his Legion of Honor were given to personal valor, and not to family connexion. "When soldiers have been baptized in the fire of a battle-field, they have all one rank in my eyes."

When a natural king becomes a titular king, every body is pleased and satisfied. The Revolution entitled the strong populace of the Faubourg St. Antoine, and every horse-boy and powder-monkey in the army, to look on Napoleon as flesh of his flesh and the creature of *his* party: but there is something in the success of grand talent which enlists an universal sympathy. For in the prevalence of sense and spirit over stupidity and malversation, all reasonable men have an interest; and as intellectual beings we feel the air purified by the electric shock, when material force is overthrown by intellectual energies. As soon as we are removed out of the reach of local and accidental partialities, Man feels that Napoleon fights for him; these are honest victories; this strong steam-engine does our work. Whatever appeals to the imagination,

by transcending the ordinary limits of human ability, wonderfully encourages and liberates us.[1] This capacious head, revolving and disposing sovereignly trains of affairs, and animating such multitudes of agents; this eye, which looked through Europe; this prompt invention; this inexhaustible resource: — what events! what romantic pictures! what strange situations! — when spying the Alps, by a sunset in the Sicilian sea; drawing up his army for battle in sight of the Pyramids, and saying to his troops, "From the tops of those pyramids, forty centuries look down on you;" fording the Red Sea; wading in the gulf of the Isthmus of Suez. On the shore of Ptolemais, gigantic projects agitated him. "Had Acre fallen, I should have changed the face of the world." His army, on the night of the battle of Austerlitz, which was the anniversary of his inauguration as Emperor, presented him with a bouquet of forty standards taken in the fight. Perhaps it is a little puerile, the pleasure he took in making these contrasts glaring; as when he pleased himself with making kings wait in his antechambers, at Tilsit, at Paris and at Erfurt.

We can not, in the universal imbecility, indecision and indolence of men, sufficiently con-

gratulate ourselves on this strong and ready actor, who took occasion by the beard, and showed us how much may be accomplished by the mere force of such virtues as all men possess in less degrees; namely, by punctuality, by personal attention, by courage and thoroughness. "The Austrians," he said, "do not know the value of time." I should cite him, in his earlier years, as a model of prudence. His power does not consist in any wild or extravagant force; in any enthusiasm like Mahomet's, or singular power of persuasion; but in the exercise of common-sense on each emergency, instead of abiding by rules and customs. The lesson he teaches is that which vigor always teaches; — that there is always room for it. To what heaps of cowardly doubts is not that man's life an answer.[1] When he appeared it was the belief of all military men that there could be nothing new in war; as it is the belief of men to-day that nothing new can be undertaken in politics, or in church, or in letters, or in trade, or in farming, or in our social manners and customs; and as it is at all times the belief of society that the world is used up. But Bonaparte knew better than society; and moreover knew that he knew better. I think all men know better

than they do; know that the institutions we so volubly commend are go-carts and baubles; but they dare not trust their presentiments. Bonaparte relied on his own sense, and did not care a bean for other people's. The world treated his novelties just as it treats everybody's novelties, — made infinite objection, mustered all the impediments; but he snapped his finger at their objections. "What creates great difficulty," he remarks, "in the profession of the land-commander, is the necessity of feeding so many men and animals. If he allows himself to be guided by the commissaries he will never stir, and all his expeditions will fail." An example of his common-sense is what he says of the passage of the Alps in winter, which all writers, one repeating after the other, had described as impracticable. "The winter," says Napoleon, "is not the most unfavorable season for the passage of lofty mountains. The snow is then firm, the weather settled, and there is nothing to fear from avalanches, the real and only danger to be apprehended in the Alps. On these high mountains there are often very fine days in December, of a dry cold, with extreme calmness in the air." Read his account, too, of the way in which battles are gained. "In all battles a moment occurs

when the bravest troops, after having made the greatest efforts, feel inclined to run. That terror proceeds from a want of confidence in their own courage, and it only requires a slight opportunity, a pretence, to restore confidence to them. The art is, to give rise to the opportunity and to invent the pretence. At Arcola I won the battle with twenty-five horsemen. I seized that moment of lassitude, gave every man a trumpet, and gained the day with this handful. You see that two armies are two bodies which meet and endeavor to frighten each other; a moment of panic occurs, and that moment must be turned to advantage. When a man has been present in many actions, he distinguishes that moment without difficulty: it is as easy as casting up an addition."

This deputy of the nineteenth century added to his gifts a capacity for speculation on general topics. He delighted in running through the range of practical, of literary and of abstract questions. His opinion is always original and to the purpose. On the voyage to Egypt he liked, after dinner, to fix on three or four persons to support a proposition, and as many to oppose it. He gave a subject, and the discussions turned on questions of religion, the different kinds of

government, and the art of war. One day he asked whether the planets were inhabited? On another, what was the age of the world? Then he proposed to consider the probability of the destruction of the globe, either by water or by fire: at another time, the truth or fallacy of presentiments, and the interpretation of dreams. He was very fond of talking of religion. In 1806 he conversed with Fournier, bishop of Montpellier, on matters of theology. There were two points on which they could not agree, viz. that of hell, and that of salvation out of the pale of the church. The Emperor told Josephine that he disputed like a devil on these two points, on which the bishop was inexorable. To the philosophers he readily yielded all that was proved against religion as the work of men and time, but he would not hear of materialism. One fine night, on deck, amid a clatter of materialism, Bonaparte pointed to the stars, and said, "You may talk as long as you please, gentlemen, but who made all that?" He delighted in the conversation of men of science, particularly of Monge and Berthollet; but the men of letters he slighted; they were "manufacturers of phrases." Of medicine too he was fond of talking, and with those of its practitioners whom he

most esteemed, — with Corvisart at Paris, and with Antonomarchi at St. Helena. "Believe me," he said to the last, "we had better leave off all these remedies: life is a fortress which neither you nor I know any thing about. Why throw obstacles in the way of its defence? Its own means are superior to all the apparatus of your laboratories.[1] Corvisart candidly agreed with me that all your filthy mixtures are good for nothing. Medicine is a collection of uncertain prescriptions, the results of which, taken collectively, are more fatal than useful to mankind. Water, air and cleanliness are the chief articles in my pharmacopœia."

His memoirs, dictated to Count Montholon and General Gourgaud at St. Helena, have great value, after all the deduction that it seems is to be made from them on account of his known disingenuousness. He has the good-nature of strength and conscious superiority.[2] I admire his simple, clear narrative of his battles; — good as Cæsar's; his good-natured and sufficiently respectful account of Marshal Wurmser and his other antagonists; and his own equality as a writer to his varying subject. The most agreeable portion is the Campaign in Egypt.

He had hours of thought and wisdom.[3] In

intervals of leisure, either in the camp or the palace, Napoleon appears as a man of genius directing on abstract questions the native appetite for truth and the impatience of words he was wont to show in war. He could enjoy every play of invention, a romance, a *bon mot*, as well as a stratagem in a campaign. He delighted to fascinate Josephine and her ladies, in a dim-lighted apartment, by the terrors of a fiction to which his voice and dramatic power lent every addition.

I call Napoleon the agent or attorney of the middle class of modern society; of the throng who fill the markets, shops, counting-houses, manufactories, ships, of the modern world, aiming to be rich. He was the agitator, the destroyer of prescription, the internal improver, the liberal, the radical, the inventor of means, the opener of doors and markets, the subverter of monopoly and abuse. Of course the rich and aristocratic did not like him. England, the centre of capital, and Rome and Austria, centres of tradition and genealogy, opposed him. The consternation of the dull and conservative classes, the terror of the foolish old men and old women of the Roman conclave, who in their despair took hold of any thing, and would cling to red-

hot iron, — the vain attempts of statists to amuse and deceive him, of the emperor of Austria to bribe him; and the instinct of the young, ardent and active men every where, which pointed him out as the giant of the middle class, make his history bright and commanding. He had the virtues of the masses of his constituents: he had also their vices. I am sorry that the brilliant picture has its reverse. But that is the fatal quality which we discover in our pursuit of wealth, that it is treacherous, and is bought by the breaking or weakening of the sentiments; and it is inevitable that we should find the same fact in the history of this champion, who proposed to himself simply a brilliant career, without any stipulation or scruple concerning the means.

Bonaparte was singularly destitute of generous sentiments. The highest-placed individual in the most cultivated age and population of the world, — he has not the merit of common truth and honesty. He is unjust to his generals; egotistic and monopolizing; meanly stealing the credit of their great actions from Kellermann, from Bernadotte; intriguing to involve his faithful Junot in hopeless bankruptcy, in order to drive him to a distance from Paris, because the

familiarity of his manners offends the new pride of his throne. He is a boundless liar. The official paper, his "Moniteur," and all his bulletins, are proverbs for saying what he wished to be believed; and worse, — he sat, in his premature old age, in his lonely island, coldly falsifying facts and dates and characters, and giving to history a theatrical *éclat*. Like all Frenchmen he has a passion for stage effect. Every action that breathes of generosity is poisoned by this calculation. His star, his love of glory, his doctrine of the immortality of the soul, are all French. "I must dazzle and astonish. If I were to give the liberty of the press, my power could not last three days." To make a great noise is his favorite design. "A great reputation is a great noise: the more there is made, the farther off it is heard. Laws, institutions, monuments, nations, all fall; but the noise continues, and resounds in after ages." His doctrine of immortality is simply fame. His theory of influence is not flattering. "There are two levers for moving men, — interest and fear. Love is a silly infatuation, depend upon it. Friendship is but a name. I love nobody. I do not even love my brothers: perhaps Joseph a little, from habit, and because he is my elder; and Duroc, I love

him too; but why? — because his character pleases me: he is stern and resolute, and I believe the fellow never shed a tear. For my part I know very well that I have no true friends. As long as I continue to be what I am, I may have as many pretended friends as I please. Leave sensibility to women; but men should be firm in heart and purpose, or they should have nothing to do with war and government." He was thoroughly unscrupulous. He would steal, slander, assassinate, drown and poison, as his interest dictated. He had no generosity, but mere vulgar hatred; he was intensely selfish; he was perfidious; he cheated at cards; he was a prodigious gossip, and opened letters, and delighted in his infamous police, and rubbed his hands with joy when he had intercepted some morsel of intelligence concerning the men and women about him, boasting that "he knew every thing;" and interfered with the cutting the dresses of the women; and listened after the hurrahs and the compliments of the street, incognito. His manners were coarse. He treated women with low familiarity. He had the habit of pulling their ears and pinching their cheeks when he was in good humor, and of pulling the ears and whiskers of men, and of striking and

horse-play with them, to his last days. It does not appear that he listened at key-holes, or at least that he was caught at it. In short, when you have penetrated through all the circles of power and splendor, you were not dealing with a gentleman, at last; but with an impostor and a rogue; and he fully deserves the epithet of *Jupiter Scapin*, or a sort of Scamp Jupiter.'

In describing the two parties into which modern society divides itself, — the democrat and the conservative, — I said, Bonaparte represents the democrat, or the party of men of business, against the stationary or conservative party. I omitted then to say, what is material to the statement, namely that these two parties differ only as young and old. The democrat is a young conservative; the conservative is an old democrat. The aristocrat is the democrat ripe and gone to seed; — because both parties stand on the one ground of the supreme value of property, which one endeavors to get, and the other to keep. Bonaparte may be said to represent the whole history of this party, its youth and its age; yes, and with poetic justice its fate, in his own. The counter-revolution, the counter-party, still waits for its organ and representative,

in a lover and a man of truly public and universal aims.

Here was an experiment, under the most favorable conditions, of the powers of intellect without conscience.[1] Never was such a leader so endowed and so weaponed; never leader found such aids and followers. And what was the result of this vast talent and power, of these immense armies, burned cities, squandered treasures, immolated millions of men, of this demoralized Europe? It came to no result. All passed away like the smoke of his artillery, and left no trace. He left France smaller, poorer, feebler, than he found it; and the whole contest for freedom was to be begun again.[2] The attempt was in principle suicidal. France served him with life and limb and estate, as long as it could identify its interest with him; but when men saw that after victory was another war; after the destruction of armies, new conscriptions; and they who had toiled so desperately were never nearer to the reward,— they could not spend what they had earned, nor repose on their down-beds, nor strut in their châteaux,— they deserted him. Men found that his absorbing egotism was deadly to all other men. It resembled the torpedo, which inflicts a succession

of shocks on any one who takes hold of it, producing spasms which contract the muscles of the hand, so that the man can not open his fingers; and the animal inflicts new and more violent shocks, until he paralyzes and kills his victim. So this exorbitant egotist narrowed, impoverished and absorbed the power and existence of those who served him; and the universal cry of France and of Europe in 1814 was, "Enough of him;" "*Assez de Bonaparte.*"

It was not Bonaparte's fault. He did all that in him lay to live and thrive without moral principle. It was the nature of things, the eternal law of man and of the world which baulked and ruined him; and the result, in a million experiments, will be the same. Every experiment, by multitudes or by individuals, that has a sensual and selfish aim, will fail. The pacific Fourier will be as inefficient as the pernicious Napoleon. As long as our civilization is essentially one of property, of fences, of exclusiveness, it will be mocked by delusions. Our riches will leave us sick; there will be bitterness in our laughter, and our wine will burn our mouth. Only that good profits which we can taste with all doors open, and which serves all men.

VII

GOETHE; OR, THE WRITER

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I FIND a provision in the constitution of the world for the writer, or secretary, who is to report the doings of the miraculous spirit of life that everywhere throbs and works. His office is a reception of the facts into the mind, and then a selection of the eminent and characteristic experiences.

Nature will be reported. All things are engaged in writing their history. The planet, the pebble, goes attended by its shadow. The rolling rock leaves its scratches on the mountain; the river its channel in the soil; the animal its bones in the stratum; the fern and leaf their modest epitaph in the coal. The falling drop makes its sculpture in the sand or the stone. Not a foot steps into the snow or along the ground, but prints, in characters more or less lasting, a map of its march. Every act of the man inscribes itself in the memories of his fellows and in his own manners and face. The air is full of sounds; the sky, of tokens; the round is all memoranda and signatures, and every object covered over with hints which speak to the intelligent.

In nature, this self-registration is incessant, and the narrative is the print of the seal. It neither exceeds nor comes short of the fact. But nature strives upward; and, in man, the report is something more than print of the seal. It is a new and finer form of the original. The record is alive, as that which it recorded is alive. In man, the memory is a kind of looking-glass, which, having received the images of surrounding objects, is touched with life, and disposes them in a new order.[1] The facts do not lie in it inert; but some subside and others shine; so that we soon have a new picture, composed of the eminent experiences. The man coöperates. He loves to communicate; and that which is for him to say lies as a load on his heart until it is delivered. But, besides the universal joy of conversation, some men are born with exalted powers for this second creation. Men are born to write. The gardener saves every slip and seed and peach-stone: his vocation is to be a planter of plants. Not less does the writer attend his affair. Whatever he beholds or experiences, comes to him as a model and sits for its picture. He counts it all nonsense that they say, that some things are undescribable. He believes that all that can be thought can be

written, first or last; and he would report the Holy Ghost, or attempt it. Nothing so broad, so subtle, or so dear, but comes therefore commended to his pen, and he will write. In his eyes, a man is the faculty of reporting, and the universe is the possibility of being reported. In conversation, in calamity, he finds new materials; as our German poet said, "Some god gave me the power to paint what I suffer." He draws his rents from rage and pain. By acting rashly, he buys the power of talking wisely. Vexations and a tempest of passion only fill his sail; as the good Luther writes, "When I am angry, I can pray well and preach well:" and, if we knew the genesis of fine strokes of eloquence, they might recall the complaisance of Sultan Amurath, who struck off some Persian heads, that his physician, Vesalius, might see the spasms in the muscles of the neck.[1] His failures are the preparation of his victories. A new thought or a crisis of passion apprises him that all that he has yet learned and written is exoteric, — is not the fact, but some rumor of the fact. What then? Does he throw away the pen? No; he begins again to describe in the new light which has shined on him, — if, by some means, he may yet save some true

word. Nature conspires. Whatever can be thought can be spoken, and still rises for utterance, though to rude and stammering organs. If they can not compass it, it waits and works, until at last it moulds them to its perfect will and is articulated.

This striving after imitative expression, which one meets every where, is significant of the aim of nature, but is mere stenography. There are higher degrees, and nature has more splendid endowments for those whom she elects to a superior office ; for the class of scholars or writers, who see connection where the multitude see fragments, and who are impelled to exhibit the facts in order, and so to supply the axis on which the frame of things turns. Nature has dearly at heart the formation of the speculative man, or scholar. It is an end never lost sight of, and is prepared in the original casting of things. He is no permissive or accidental appearance, but an organic agent, one of the estates of the realm, provided and prepared from of old and from everlasting, in the knitting and contexture of things. Presentiments, impulses, cheer him. There is a certain heat in the breast which attends the perception of a primary truth, which is the shining of the spiritual sun down

into the shaft of the mine. Every thought which dawns on the mine, in the moment of its emergence announces its own rank, — whether it is some whimsy, or whether it is a power.

If he have his incitements, there is, on the other side, invitation and need enough of his gift. Society has, at all times, the same want, namely of one sane man with adequate powers of expression to hold up each object of monomania in its right relations. The ambitious and mercenary bring their last new mumbo-jumbo, whether tariff, Texas, railroad, Romanism, mesmerism, or California; and, by detaching the object from its relations, easily succeed in making it seen in a glare; and a multitude go mad about it, and they are not to be reproved or cured by the opposite multitude who are kept from this particular insanity by an equal frenzy on another crotchet. But let one man have the comprehensive eye that can replace this isolated prodigy in its right neighborhood and bearings, — the illusion vanishes, and the returning reason of the community thanks the reason of the monitor.[1]

The scholar is the man of the ages, but he must also wish with other men to stand well with his contemporaries. But there is a certain

ridicule, among superficial people, thrown on the scholars or clerisy, which is of no import unless the scholar heed it. In this country, the emphasis of conversation and of public opinion commends the practical man; and the solid portion of the community is named with significant respect in every circle. Our people are of Bonaparte's opinion concerning ideologists. Ideas are subversive of social order and comfort, and at last make a fool of the possessor. It is believed, the ordering a cargo of goods from New York to Smyrna, or the running up and down to procure a company of subscribers to set a-going five or ten thousand spindles, or the negotiations of a caucus and the practising on the prejudices and facility of country-people to secure their votes in November, — is practical and commendable.

If I were to compare action of a much higher strain with a life of contemplation, I should not venture to pronounce with much confidence in favor of the former. Mankind have such a deep stake in inward illumination, that there is much to be said by the hermit or monk in defence of his life of thought and prayer. A certain partiality, a headiness and loss of balance, is the tax which all action must pay. Act, if you like, —

but you do it at your peril. Men's actions are too strong for them. Show me a man who has acted and who has not been the victim and slave of his action. What they have done commits and enforces them to do the same again. The first act, which was to be an experiment, becomes a sacrament. The fiery reformer embodies his aspiration in some rite or covenant, and he and his friends cleave to the form and lose the aspiration. The Quaker has established Quakerism, the Shaker has established his monastery and his dance; and although each prates of spirit, there is no spirit, but repetition, which is anti-spiritual. But where are his new things of to-day? In actions of enthusiasm this drawback appears, but in those lower activities, which have no higher aim than to make us more comfortable and more cowardly; in actions of cunning, actions that steal and lie, actions that divorce the speculative from the practical faculty and put a ban on reason and sentiment, there is nothing else but drawback and negation. The Hindoos write in their sacred books, "Children only, and not the learned, speak of the speculative and the practical faculties as two. They are but one, for both obtain the selfsame end, and the place which is gained by the followers of

the one is gained by the followers of the other. That man seeth, who seeth that the speculative and the practical doctrines are one." For great action must draw on the spiritual nature. The measure of action is the sentiment from which it proceeds. The greatest action may easily be one of the most private circumstance.

This disparagement will not come from the leaders, but from inferior persons. The robust gentlemen who stand at the head of the practical class, share the ideas of the time, and have too much sympathy with the speculative class. It is not from men excellent in any kind that disparagement of any other is to be looked for. With such, Talleyrand's question is ever the main one; not, is he rich? is he committed? is he well-meaning? has he this or that faculty? is he of the movement? is he of the establishment? — but, *Is he anybody?* does he stand for something? He must be good of his kind. That is all that Talleyrand, all that State-street, all that the common-sense of mankind asks. Be real and admirable, not as we know, but as you know. Able men do not care in what kind a man is able, so only that he is able. A master likes a master, and does not stipulate whether it be orator, artist, craftsman, or king.[1]

Society has really no graver interest than the well-being of the literary class. And it is not to be denied that men are cordial in their recognition and welcome of intellectual accomplishments. Still the writer does not stand with us on any commanding ground. I think this to be his own fault. A pound passes for a pound. There have been times when he was a sacred person: he wrote Bibles, the first hymns, the codes, the epics, tragic songs, Sibylline verses, Chaldean oracles, Laconian sentences, inscribed on temple walls. Every word was true, and woke the nations to new life. He wrote without levity and without choice. Every word was carved before his eyes into the earth and the sky; and the sun and stars were only letters of the same purport and of no more necessity. But how can he be honored when he does not honor himself; when he loses himself in a crowd; when he is no longer the lawgiver, but the sycophant, ducking to the giddy opinion of a reckless public; when he must sustain with shameless advocacy some bad government, or must bark, all the year round, in opposition; or write conventional criticism, or profligate novels, or at any rate write without thought, and without recurrence by day and by night to the sources of inspiration?

Some reply to these questions may be furnished by looking over the list of men of literary genius in our age. Among these no more instructive name occurs than that of Goethe to represent the powers and duties of the scholar or writer.[1]

I described Bonaparte as a representative of the popular external life and aims of the nineteenth century. Its other half, its poet, is Goethe, a man quite domesticated in the century, breathing its air, enjoying its fruits, impossible at any earlier time, and taking away, by his colossal parts, the reproach of weakness which but for him would lie on the intellectual works of the period.[2] He appears at a time when a general culture has spread itself and has smoothed down all sharp individual traits; when, in the absence of heroic characters, a social comfort and coöperation have come in. There is no poet, but scores of poetic writers; no Columbus, but hundreds of post-captains, with transit-telescope, barometer and concentrated soup and pemmican; no Demosthenes, no Chatham, but any number of clever parliamentary and forensic debaters; no prophet or saint, but colleges of divinity; no learned man, but learned societies, a cheap press, reading-

rooms and book-clubs without number. There was never such a miscellany of facts. The world extends itself like American trade. We conceive Greek or Roman life, life in the Middle Ages, to be a simple and comprehensible affair; but modern life to respect a multitude of things, which is distracting.

Goethe was the philosopher of this multiplicity; hundred-handed, Argus-eyed, able and happy to cope with this rolling miscellany of facts and sciences, and by his own versatility to dispose of them with ease; a manly mind, unembarrassed by the variety of coats of convention with which life had got encrusted, easily able by his subtlety to pierce these and to draw his strength from nature, with which he lived in full communion.' What is strange too, he lived in a small town, in a petty state, in a defeated state, and in a time when Germany played no such leading part in the world's affairs as to swell the bosom of her sons with any metropolitan pride, such as might have cheered a French, or English, or once, a Roman or Attic genius. Yet there is no trace of provincial limitation in his muse. He is not a debtor to his position, but was born with a free and controlling genius.

The Helena, or the second part of Faust, is a

philosophy of literature set in poetry ; the work of one who found himself the master of histories, mythologies, philosophies, sciences and national literatures, in the encyclopædical manner in which modern erudition, with its international intercourse of the whole earth's population, researches into Indian, Etruscan and all Cyclopean arts ; geology, chemistry, astronomy ; and every one of these kingdoms assuming a certain aerial and poetic character, by reason of the multitude. One looks at a king with reverence ; but if one should chance to be at a congress of kings, the eye would take liberties with the peculiarities of each. These are not wild miraculous songs, but elaborate forms to which the poet has confided the results of eighty years of observation.[1] This reflective and critical wisdom makes the poem more truly the flower of this time. It dates itself. Still he is a poet,— poet of a prouder laurel than any contemporary, and, under this plague of microscopes (for he seems to see out of every pore of his skin), strikes the harp with a hero's strength and grace.

The wonder of the book is its superior intelligence. In the menstruum of this man's wit, the past and the present ages, and their religions, politics and modes of thinking, are dis-

solved into archetypes and ideas. What new mythologies sail through his head! The Greeks said that Alexander went as far as Chaos; Goethe went, only the other day, as far; and one step farther he hazarded, and brought himself safe back.

There is a heart-cheering freedom in his speculation. The immense horizon which journeys with us lends its majesty to trifles and to matters of convenience and necessity, as to solemn and festal performances. He was the soul of his century. If that was learned, and had become, by population, compact organization and drill of parts, one great Exploring Expedition, accumulating a glut of facts and fruits too fast for any hitherto-existing savans to classify, — this man's mind had ample chambers for the distribution of all. He had a power to unite the detached atoms again by their own law. He has clothed our modern existence with poetry. Amid littleness and detail, he detected the Genius of life, the old cunning Proteus, nestling close beside us, and showed that the dulness and prose we ascribe to the age was only another of his masks: —

"His very flight is presence in disguise:" [1]

— that he had put off a gay uniform for a fa-

tigue dress, and was not a whit less vivacious or rich in Liverpool or the Hague than once in Rome or Antioch. He sought him in public squares and main streets, in boulevards and hotels; and, in the solidest kingdom of routine and the senses, he showed the lurking dæmonic power; that, in actions of routine, a thread of mythology and fable spins itself: and this, by tracing the pedigree of every usage and practice, every institution, utensil and means, home to its origin in the structure of man.[1] He had an extreme impatience of conjecture and of rhetoric. "I have guesses enough of my own; if a man write a book, let him set down only what he knows." He writes in the plainest and lowest tone, omitting a great deal more than he writes, and putting ever a thing for a word. He has explained the distinction between the antique and the modern spirit and art. He has defined art, its scope and laws. He has said the best things about nature that ever were said.[2] He treats nature as the old philosophers, as the seven wise masters did, — and, with whatever loss of French tabulation and dissection, poetry and humanity remain to us; and they have some doctoral skill. Eyes are better on the whole than telescopes or microscopes. He has con-

tributed a key to many parts of nature, through the rare turn for unity and simplicity in his mind. Thus Goethe suggested the leading idea of modern botany, that a leaf or the eye of a leaf is the unit of botany, and that every part of a plant is only a transformed leaf to meet a new condition; and, by varying the conditions, a leaf may be converted into any other organ, and any other organ into a leaf. In like manner, in osteology, he assumed that one vertebra of the spine might be considered as the unit of the skeleton: the head was only the uttermost vertebræ transformed. "The plant goes from knot to knot, closing at last with the flower and the seed. So the tape-worm, the caterpillar, goes from knot to knot and closes with the head. Man and the higher animals are built up through the vertebræ, the powers being concentrated in the head." In optics again he rejected the artificial theory of seven colors, and considered that every color was the mixture of light and darkness in new proportions. It is really of very little consequence what topic he writes upon. He sees at every pore, and has a certain gravitation towards truth. He will realize what you say. He hates to be trifled with and to be made to say over again some old wife's fable that has

had possession of men's faith these thousand years. He may as well see if it is true as another. He sifts it. I am here, he would say, to be the measure and judge of these things. Why should I take them on trust? And therefore what he says of religion, of passion, of marriage, of manners, of property, of paper-money, of periods of belief, of omens, of luck, or whatever else, refuses to be forgotten.

Take the most remarkable example that could occur of this tendency to verify every term in popular use. The Devil had played an important part in mythology in all times. Goethe would have no word that does not cover a thing. The same measure will still serve: "I have never heard of any crime which I might not have committed." So he flies at the throat of this imp. He shall be real; he shall be modern; he shall be European; he shall dress like a gentleman, and accept the manners, and walk in the streets, and be well initiated in the life of Vienna and of Heidelberg in 1820, — or he shall not exist. Accordingly, he stripped him of mythologic gear, of horns, cloven foot, harpoon tail, brimstone and blue-fire, and instead of looking in books and pictures, looked for him in his own mind, in every shade of coldness, selfishness

and unbelief that, in crowds or in solitude, darkens over the human thought, — and found that the portrait gained reality and terror by every thing he added and by every thing he took away. He found that the essence of this hobgoblin which had hovered in shadow about the habitations of men ever since there were men, was pure intellect, applied, — as always there is a tendency, — to the service of the senses : and he flung into literature, in his Mephistopheles, the first organic figure that has been added for some ages, and which will remain as long as the Prometheus.[1]

I have no design to enter into any analysis of his numerous works. They consist of translations, criticism, dramas, lyric and every other description of poems, literary journals and portraits of distinguished men. Yet I cannot omit to specify the Wilhelm Meister.

Wilhelm Meister is a novel in every sense, the first of its kind, called by its admirers the only delineation of modern society, — as if other novels, those of Scott for example, dealt with costume and condition, this with the spirit of life. It is a book over which some veil is still drawn. It is read by very intelligent persons with wonder and delight. It is preferred by some

such to Hamlet, as a work of genius. I suppose no book of this century can compare with it in its delicious sweetness, so new, so provoking to the mind, gratifying it with so many and so solid thoughts, just insights into life and manners and characters; so many good hints for the conduct of life, so many unexpected glimpses into a higher sphere, and never a trace of rhetoric or dulness. A very provoking book to the curiosity of young men of genius, but a very unsatisfactory one. Lovers of light reading, those who look in it for the entertainment they find in a romance, are disappointed. On the other hand, those who begin it with the higher hope to read in it a worthy history of genius, and the just award of the laurel to its toils and denials, have also reason to complain. We had an English romance here, not long ago, professing to embody the hope of a new age and to unfold the political hope of the party called 'Young England,' — in which the only reward of virtue is a seat in Parliament and a peerage. Goethe's romance has a conclusion as lame and immoral. George Sand, in Consuelo and its continuation, has sketched a truer and more dignified picture. In the progress of the story, the characters of the hero and heroine expand at a rate that shivers

the porcelain chess-table of aristocratic convention: they quit the society and habits of their rank, they lose their wealth, they become the servants of great ideas and of the most generous social ends; until at last the hero, who is the centre and fountain of an association for the rendering of the noblest benefits to the human race, no longer answers to his own titled name; it sounds foreign and remote in his ear. "I am only man," he says; "I breathe and work for man;" and this in poverty and extreme sacrifices.[1] Goethe's hero, on the contrary, has so many weaknesses and impurities and keeps such bad company, that the sober English public, when the book was translated, were disgusted. And yet it is so crammed with wisdom, with knowledge of the world and with knowledge of laws; the persons so truly and subtly drawn, and with such few strokes, and not a word too much, — the book remains ever so new and unexhausted, that we must even let it go its way and be willing to get what good from it we can, assured that it has only begun its office and has millions of readers yet to serve.

The argument is the passage of a democrat to the aristocracy, using both words in their best sense. And this passage is not made in any mean

or creeping way, but through the hall door. Nature and character assist, and the rank is made real by sense and probity in the nobles. No generous youth can escape this charm of reality in the book, so that it is highly stimulating to intellect and courage.[1]

The ardent and holy Novalis characterized the book as "thoroughly modern and prosaic; the romantic is completely levelled in it; so is the poetry of nature; the wonderful. The book treats only of the ordinary affairs of men: it is a poeticized civic and domestic story. The wonderful in it is expressly treated as fiction and enthusiastic dreaming:" — and yet, what is also characteristic, Novalis soon returned to this book, and it remained his favorite reading to the end of his life.

What distinguishes Goethe for French and English readers is a property which he shares with his nation, — a habitual reference to interior truth. In England and in America there is a respect for talent; and, if it is exerted in support of any ascertained or intelligible interest or party, or in regular opposition to any, the public is satisfied. In France there is even a greater delight in intellectual brilliancy for its own sake. And in all these countries, men of talent write

from talent. It is enough if the understanding is occupied, the taste propitiated, — so many columns, so many hours, filled in a lively and creditable way. The German intellect wants the French sprightliness, the fine practical understanding of the English, and the American adventure; but it has a certain probity, which never rests in a superficial performance, but asks steadily, *To what end?* A German public asks for a controlling sincerity. Here is activity of thought; but what is it for? What does the man mean? Whence, whence all these thoughts?[1]

Talent alone can not make a writer. There must be a man behind the book; a personality which by birth and quality is pledged to the doctrines there set forth, and which exists to see and state things so, and not otherwise; holding things because they are things. If he can not rightly express himself to-day, the same things subsist and will open themselves to-morrow. There lies the burden on his mind, — the burden of truth to be declared, — more or less understood; and it constitutes his business and calling in the world to see those facts through, and to make them known. What signifies that he trips and stammers; that his voice is harsh or hissing; that his method or his tropes are in-

adequate? That message will find method and imagery, articulation and melody. Though he were dumb it would speak. If not, — if there be no such God's word in the man, — what care we how adroit, how fluent, how brilliant he is?

It makes a great difference to the force of any sentence whether there be a man behind it or no. In the learned journal, in the influential newspaper, I discern no form; only some irresponsible shadow; oftener some moneyed corporation, or some dangler who hopes, in the mask and robes of his paragraph, to pass for somebody. But through every clause and part of speech of a right book I meet the eyes of the most determined of men; his force and terror inundate every word; the commas and dashes are alive; so that the writing is athletic and nimble, — can go far and live long.

In England and America, one may be an adept in the writings of a Greek or Latin poet, without any poetic taste or fire. That a man has spent years on Plato and Proclus, does not afford a presumption that he holds heroic opinions, or undervalues the fashions of his town.[1] But the German nation have the most ridiculous good faith on these subjects: the student, out of the lecture-room, still broods on the lessons;

and the professor can not divest himself of the fancy that the truths of philosophy have some application to Berlin and Munich. This earnestness enables them to outsee men of much more talent. Hence almost all the valuable distinctions which are current in higher conversation have been derived to us from Germany. But whilst men distinguished for wit and learning, in England and France, adopt their study and their side with a certain levity, and are not understood to be very deeply engaged, from grounds of character, to the topic or the part they espouse, — Goethe, the head and body of the German nation, does not speak from talent, but the truth shines through: he is very wise, though his talent often veils his wisdom. However excellent his sentence is, he has somewhat better in view. It awakens my curiosity. He has the formidable independence which converse with truth gives: hear you, or forbear, his fact abides; and your interest in the writer is not confined to his story and he dismissed from memory when he has performed his task creditably, as a baker when he has left his loaf; but his work is the least part of him. The old Eternal Genius who built the world has confided himself more to this man than to any other.

I dare not say that Goethe ascended to the highest grounds from which genius has spoken. He has not worshipped the highest unity; he is incapable of a self-surrender to the moral sentiment. There are nobler strains in poetry than any he has sounded. There are writers poorer in talent, whose tone is purer, and more touches the heart. Goethe can never be dear to men. His is not even the devotion to pure truth; but to truth for the sake of culture. He has no aims less large than the conquest of universal nature, of universal truth, to be his portion: a man not to be bribed, nor deceived, nor overawed; of a stoical self-command and self-denial, and having one test for all men, — *What can you teach me?* All possessions are valued by him for that only; rank, privileges, health, time, Being itself.

He is the type of culture, the amateur of all arts and sciences and events; artistic, but not artist; spiritual, but not spiritualist. There is nothing he had not right to know: there is no weapon in the armory of universal genius he did not take into his hand, but with peremptory heed that he should not be for a moment prejudiced by his instruments. He lays a ray of light under every fact, and between himself and

his dearest property. From him nothing was hid, nothing withholden. The lurking dæmons sat to him, and the saint who saw the dæmons; and the metaphysical elements took form. "Piety itself is no aim, but only a means whereby through purest inward peace we may attain to highest culture." And his penetration of every secret of the fine arts will make Goethe still more statuesque. His affections help him, like women employed by Cicero to worm out the secret of conspirators. Enmities he has none. Enemy of him you may be, — if so you shall teach him aught which your good-will can not, were it only what experience will accrue from your ruin. Enemy and welcome, but enemy on high terms. He can not hate anybody; his time is worth too much. Temperamental antagonisms may be suffered, but like feuds of emperors, who fight dignifiedly across kingdoms.[1]

His autobiography, under the title of Poetry and Truth out of my Life, is the expression of the idea — now familiar to the world through the German mind, but a novelty to England, Old and New, when that book appeared — that a man exists for culture; not for what he can accomplish, but for what can be

accomplished in him. The reaction of things on the man is the only noteworthy result. An intellectual man can see himself as a third person; therefore his faults and delusions interest him equally with his successes. Though he wishes to prosper in affairs, he wishes more to know the history and destiny of man; whilst the clouds of egotists drifting about him are only interested in a low success.

This idea reigns in the Dichtung und Wahrheit and directs the selection of the incidents; and nowise the external importance of events, the rank of the personages, or the bulk of incomes. Of course the book affords slender materials for what would be reckoned with us a Life of Goethe; — few dates, no correspondence, no details of offices or employments, no light on his marriage; and a period of ten years, that should be the most active in his life, after his settlement at Weimar, is sunk in silence. Meantime certain love affairs that came to nothing, as people say, have the strangest importance: he crowds us with details: — certain whimsical opinions, cosmogonies and religions of his own invention, and especially his relations to remarkable minds and to critical epochs of thought: — these he magnifies. His

Daily and Yearly Journal, his Italian Travels, his Campaign in France and the historical part of his Theory of Colors, have the same interest. In the last, he rapidly notices Kepler, Roger Bacon, Galileo, Newton, Voltaire, etc.; and the charm of this portion of the book consists in the simplest statement of the relation betwixt these grandees of European scientific history and himself; the mere drawing of the lines from Goethe to Kepler, from Goethe to Bacon, from Goethe to Newton. The drawing of the line is, for the time and person, a solution of the formidable problem, and gives pleasure when Iphigenia and Faust do not, without any cost of invention comparable to that of Iphigenia and Faust.

This lawgiver of art is not an artist. Was it that he knew too much, that his sight was microscopic and interfered with the just perspective, the seeing of the whole? He is fragmentary; a writer of occasional poems and of an encyclopædia of sentences. When he sits down to write a drama or a tale, he collects and sorts his observations from a hundred sides, and combines them into the body as fitly as he can. A great deal refuses to incorporate: this he adds loosely as letters of the parties, leaves

from their journals, or the like. A great deal still is left that will not find any place. This the bookbinder alone can give any cohesion to; and hence, notwithstanding the looseness of many of his works, we have volumes of detached paragraphs, aphorisms, *Xenien*,[1] etc.

I suppose the worldly tone of his tales grew out of the calculations of self-culture. It was the infirmity of an admirable scholar, who loved the world out of gratitude; who knew where libraries, galleries, architecture, laboratories, savans and leisure were to be had, and who did not quite trust the compensations of poverty and nakedness. Socrates loved Athens; Montaigne, Paris; and Madame de Staël said she was only vulnerable on that side (namely, of Paris). It has its favorable aspect. All the geniuses are usually so ill-assorted and sickly that one is ever wishing them somewhere else. We seldom see anybody who is not uneasy or afraid to live. There is a slight blush of shame on the cheek of good men and aspiring men, and a spice of caricature. But this man was entirely at home and happy in his century and the world. None was so fit to live, or more heartily enjoyed the game. In this aim of culture, which is the genius of his works, is their power. The idea

of absolute, eternal truth, without reference to my own enlargement by it, is higher. The surrender to the torrent of poetic inspiration is higher; but compared with any motives on which books are written in England and America, this is very truth, and has the power to inspire which belongs to truth. Thus has he brought back to a book some of its ancient might and dignity.

Goethe, coming into an over-civilized time and country, when original talent was oppressed under the load of books and mechanical auxiliaries and the distracting variety of claims, taught men how to dispose of this mountainous miscellany and make it subservient. I join Napoleon with him, as being both representatives of the impatience and reaction of nature against the *morgue* of conventions, — two stern realists, who, with their scholars, have severally set the axe at the root of the tree of cant and seeming, for this time and for all time. This cheerful laborer, with no external popularity or provocation, drawing his motive and his plan from his own breast, tasked himself with stints for a giant, and without relaxation or rest, except by alternating his pursuits, worked on for eighty years with the steadiness of his first zeal.

It is the last lesson of modern science that the highest simplicity of structure is produced, not by few elements, but by the highest complexity. Man is the most composite of all creatures; the wheel-insect, *volvox globator*, is at the other extreme. We shall learn to draw rents and revenues from the immense patrimony of the old and the recent ages. Goethe teaches courage, and the equivalence of all times; that the disadvantages of any epoch exist only to the faint-hearted. Genius hovers with his sunshine and music close by the darkest and deafest eras. No mortgage, no attainder, will hold on men or hours. The world is young: the former great men call to us affectionately. We too must write Bibles, to unite again the heavens and the earthly world. The secret of genius is to suffer no fiction to exist for us; to realize all that we know; in the high refinement of modern life, in arts, in sciences, in books, in men, to exact good faith, reality and a purpose; and first, last, midst and without end, to honor every truth by use.[1]

MISCELLANIES

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I

THE LORD'S SUPPER

SERMON DELIVERED BEFORE THE SECOND CHURCH IN BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 9, 1832

I LIKE a church; I like a cowl,
I love a prophet of the soul;
And on my heart monastic aisles
Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles:
Yet not for all his faith can see
Would I that cowlèd churchman be.
Why should the vest on him allure,
Which I could not on me endure?

The word unto the prophet spoken
Was writ on tables yet unbroken;
The word by seers or sibyls told,
In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. — Romans xiv. 17.

IN the history of the Church no subject has been more fruitful of controversy than the Lord's Supper. There never has been any unanimity in the understanding of its nature, nor any uniformity in the mode of celebrating it. Without considering the frivolous questions which have been lately debated as to the posture in which men should partake of it; whether mixed or unmixed wine should be served; whether leavened or unleavened bread should be broken; — the questions have been settled differently in every church, who should be admitted to the feast, and how often it should be prepared. In the Catholic Church, infants were at one time permitted and then forbidden to partake; and since the ninth century the laity receive the bread only, the cup being reserved to the priesthood. So, as to the time of the solemnity. In the Fourth Lateran Council, it was decreed that any believer should communicate at least once in a year, — at Easter. Afterwards it was determined that

this Sacrament should be received three times in the year, — at Easter, Whitsuntide and Christmas. But more important controversies have arisen respecting its nature. The famous question of the Real Presence was the main controversy between the Church of England and the Church of Rome. The doctrine of the Consubstantiation taught by Luther was denied by Calvin. In the Church of England, Archbishops Laud and Wake maintained that the elements were an Eucharist, or sacrifice of Thanksgiving to God; Cudworth and Warburton, that this was not a sacrifice, but a sacrificial feast; and Bishop Hoadley, that it was neither a sacrifice nor a feast after sacrifice, but a simple commemoration. And finally, it is now near two hundred years since the Society of Quakers denied the authority of the rite altogether, and gave good reasons for disusing it.

I allude to these facts only to show that, so far from the Supper being a tradition in which men are fully agreed, there has always been the widest room for difference of opinion upon this particular. Having recently given particular attention to this subject, I was led to the conclusion that Jesus did not intend to establish an institution for perpetual observance when he ate

the Passover with his disciples; and further, to the opinion that it is not expedient to celebrate it as we do. I shall now endeavor to state distinctly my reasons for these two opinions.

I. The authority of the rite.

An account of the Last Supper of Christ with his disciples is given by the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

In St. Matthew's Gospel (Matt. xxvi. 26–30) are recorded the words of Jesus in giving bread and wine on that occasion to his disciples, but no expression occurs intimating that this feast was hereafter to be commemorated. In St. Mark (Mark xiv. 22–25) the same words are recorded, and still with no intimation that the occasion was to be remembered. St. Luke (Luke xxii. 19), after relating the breaking of the bread, has these words: "This do in remembrance of me." In St. John, although other occurrences of the same evening are related, this whole transaction is passed over without notice.

Now observe the facts. Two of the Evangelists, namely, Matthew and John, were of the twelve disciples, and were present on that occasion. Neither of them drops the slightest intimation of any intention on the part of Jesus to set up anything permanent. John especially, the

beloved disciple, who has recorded with minuteness the conversation and the transactions of that memorable evening, has quite omitted such a notice. Neither does it appear to have come to the knowledge of Mark, who, though not an eye-witness, relates the other facts. This material fact, that the occasion was to be remembered, is found in Luke alone, who was not present. There is no reason, however, that we know, for rejecting the account of Luke. I doubt not, the expression was used by Jesus. I shall presently consider its meaning. I have only brought these accounts together, that you may judge whether it is likely that a solemn institution, to be continued to the end of time by all mankind, as they should come, nation after nation, within the influence of the Christian religion, would have been established in this slight manner — in a manner so slight, that the intention of commemorating it should not appear, from their narrative, to have caught the ear or dwelt in the mind of the only two among the twelve who wrote down what happened.

Still we must suppose that the expression, "This do in remembrance of me," had come to the ear of Luke from some disciple who was present. What did it really signify? It is a pro-

phetic and an affectionate expression. Jesus is a Jew, sitting with his countrymen, celebrating their national feast. He thinks of his own impending death, and wishes the minds of his disciples to be prepared for it. "When hereafter," he says to them, "you shall keep the Passover, it will have an altered aspect to your eyes. It is now a historical covenant of God with the Jewish nation. Hereafter it will remind you of a new covenant sealed with my blood. In years to come, as long as your people shall come up to Jerusalem to keep this feast, the connection which has subsisted between us will give a new meaning in your eyes to the national festival, as the anniversary of my death." I see natural feeling and beauty in the use of such language from Jesus, a friend to his friends; I can readily imagine that he was willing and desirous, when his disciples met, his memory should hallow their intercourse; but I cannot bring myself to believe that in the use of such an expression he looked beyond the living generation, beyond the abolition of the festival he was celebrating, and the scattering of the nation, and meant to impose a memorial feast upon the whole world.

Without presuming to fix precisely the purpose in the mind of Jesus, you will see that

many opinions may be entertained of his intention, all consistent with the opinion that he did not design a perpetual ordinance. He may have foreseen that his disciples would meet to remember him, and that with good effect. It may have crossed his mind that this would be easily continued a hundred or a thousand years, — as men more easily transmit a form than a virtue, — and yet have been altogether out of his purpose to fasten it upon men in all times and all countries.

But though the words, "Do this in remembrance of me," do not occur in Matthew, Mark or John, and although it should be granted us that, taken alone, they do not necessarily import so much as is usually thought, yet many persons are apt to imagine that the very striking and personal manner in which the eating and drinking is described, indicates a striking and formal purpose to found a festival. And I admit that this impression might probably be left upon the mind of one who read only the passages under consideration in the New Testament. But this impression is removed by reading any narrative of the mode in which the ancient or the modern Jews have kept the Passover. It is then perceived that the leading circumstances

in the Gospels are only a faithful account of that ceremony. Jesus did not celebrate the Passover, and afterwards the Supper, but the Supper was the Passover. He did with his disciples exactly what every master of a family in Jerusalem was doing at the same hour with his household. It appears that the Jews ate the lamb and the unleavened bread and drank wine after a prescribed manner. It was the custom for the master of the feast to break the bread and to bless it, using this formula, which the Talmudists have preserved to us, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, our God, who givest us the fruit of the vine," — and then to give the cup to all. Among the modern Jews, who in their dispersion retain the Passover, a hymn is also sung after this ceremony, specifying the twelve great works done by God for the deliverance of their fathers out of Egypt.

But still it may be asked, Why did Jesus make expressions so extraordinary and emphatic as these — "This is my body which is broken for you. Take; eat. This is my blood which is shed for you. Drink it"? — I reply they are not extraordinary expressions from him. They were familiar in his mouth. He always taught by parables and symbols. It was the national

way of teaching, and was largely used by him. Remember the readiness which he always showed to spiritualize every occurrence. He stopped and wrote on the sand. He admonished his disciples respecting the leaven of the Pharisees. He instructed the woman of Samaria respecting living water. He permitted himself to be anointed, declaring that it was for his interment. He washed the feet of his disciples. These are admitted to be symbolical actions and expressions. Here, in like manner, he calls the bread his body, and bids the disciples eat. He had used the same expression repeatedly before. The reason why St. John does not repeat his words on this occasion seems to be that he had reported a similar discourse of Jesus to the people of Capernaum more at length already (John vi. 27–60). He there tells the Jews, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And when the Jews on that occasion complained that they did not comprehend what he meant, he added for their better understanding, and as if for our understanding, that we might not think his body was to be actually eaten, that he only meant we should live by his commandment. He closed his discourse with these explanatory expressions:

"The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life."

Whilst I am upon this topic, I cannot help remarking that it is not a little singular that we should have preserved this rite and insisted upon perpetuating one symbolical act of Christ whilst we have totally neglected all others, — particularly one other which had at least an equal claim to our observance. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and told them that, as he had washed their feet, they ought to wash one another's feet; for he had given them an example, that they should do as he had done to them. I ask any person who believes the Supper to have been designed by Jesus to be commemorated forever, to go and read the account of it in the other Gospels, and then compare with it the account of this transaction in St. John, and tell me if this be not much more explicitly authorized than the Supper. It only differs in this, that we have found the Supper used in New England and the washing of the feet not. But if we had found it an established rite in our churches, on grounds of mere authority, it would have been impossible to have argued against it. That rite is used by the Church of Rome, and by the Sandemanians. It has been very properly

dropped by other Christians. Why? For two reasons: (1) because it was a local custom, and unsuitable in western countries; and (2) because it was typical, and all understood that humility is the thing signified. But the Passover was local too, and does not concern us, and its bread and wine were typical, and do not help us to understand the redemption which they signified. These views of the original account of the Lord's Supper lead me to esteem it an occasion full of solemn and prophetic interest, but never intended by Jesus to be the foundation of a perpetual institution.

It appears, however, in Christian history that the disciples had very early taken advantage of these impressive words of Christ to hold religious meetings, where they broke bread and drank wine as symbols. I look upon this fact as very natural in the circumstances of the Church. The disciples lived together; they threw all their property into a common stock; they were bound together by the memory of Christ, and nothing could be more natural than that this eventful evening should be affectionately remembered by them; that they, Jews like Jesus, should adopt his expressions and his types, and furthermore, that what was done with peculiar propriety by

them, his personal friends, with less propriety should come to be extended to their companions also. In this way religious feasts grew up among the early Christians. They were readily adopted by the Jewish converts, who were familiar with religious feasts, and also by the Pagan converts, whose idolatrous worship had been made up of sacred festivals, and who very readily abused these to gross riot, as appears from the censures of St. Paul. Many persons consider this fact, the observance of such a memorial feast by the early disciples, decisive of the question whether it ought to be observed by us. There was good reason for his personal friends to remember their friend and repeat his words. It was only too probable that among the half-converted Pagans and Jews, any rite, any form, would find favor, whilst yet unable to comprehend the spiritual character of Christianity.

The circumstance, however, that St. Paul adopts these views, has seemed to many persons conclusive in favor of the institution. I am of opinion that it is wholly upon the Epistle to the Corinthians, and not upon the Gospels, that the ordinance stands. Upon this matter of St. Paul's view of the Supper, a few important considerations must be stated.

The end which he has in view, in the eleventh chapter of the first Epistle, is not to enjoin upon his friends to observe the Supper, but to censure their abuse of it. We quote the passage nowadays as if it enjoined attendance upon the Supper; but he wrote it merely to chide them for drunkenness. To make their enormity plainer, he goes back to the origin of this religious feast to show what sort of feast that was, out of which this riot of theirs came, and so relates the transactions of the Last Supper. "I have received of the Lord," he says, "that which I delivered to you." By this expression it is often thought that a miraculous communication is implied; but certainly without good reason, if it is remembered that St. Paul was living in the lifetime of all the apostles who could give him an account of the transaction; and it is contrary to all reason to suppose that God should work a miracle to convey information that could so easily be got by natural means. So that the import of the expression is that he had received the story of an eye-witness such as we also possess.

But there is a material circumstance which diminishes our confidence in the correctness of the Apostle's view; and that is, the observation that his mind had not escaped the prevalent

error of the primitive Church, the belief, namely, that the second coming of Christ would shortly occur, until which time, he tells them, this feast was to be kept. Elsewhere he tells them that at that time the world would be burnt up with fire, and a new government established, in which the Saints would sit on thrones; so slow were the disciples, during the life and after the ascension of Christ, to receive the idea which we receive, that his second coming was a spiritual kingdom, the dominion of his religion in the hearts of men, to be extended gradually over the whole world. In this manner we may see clearly enough how this ancient ordinance got its footing among the early Christians, and this single expectation of a speedy reappearance of a temporal Messiah, which kept its influence even over so spiritual a man as St. Paul, would naturally tend to preserve the use of the rite when once established.

We arrive, then, at this conclusion: first, that it does not appear, from a careful examination of the account of the Last Supper in the Evangelists, that it was designed by Jesus to be perpetual; secondly, that it does not appear that the opinion of St. Paul, all things considered, ought to alter our opinion derived from the Evangelists.

One general remark before quitting this branch of this subject. We ought to be cautious in taking even the best ascertained opinions and practices of the primitive Church for our own. If it could be satisfactorily shown that they esteemed it authorized and to be transmitted forever, that does not settle the question for us. We know how inveterately they were attached to their Jewish prejudices, and how often even the influence of Christ failed to enlarge their views. On every other subject succeeding times have learned to form a judgment more in accordance with the spirit of Christianity than was the practice of the early ages.

II. But it is said: "Admit that the rite was not designed to be perpetual. What harm doth it? Here it stands, generally accepted, under some form, by the Christian world, the undoubted occasion of much good; is it not better it should remain?" This is the question of expediency.

I proceed to state a few objections that in my judgment lie against its use in its present form.

1. If the view which I have taken of the history of the institution be correct, then the claim of authority should be dropped in administering it. You say, every time you celebrate the

rite, that Jesus enjoined it; and the whole language you use conveys that impression. But if you read the New Testament as I do, you do not believe he did.

2. It has seemed to me that the use of this ordinance tends to produce confusion in our views of the relation of the soul to God. It is the old objection to the doctrine of the Trinity, — that the true worship was transferred from God to Christ, or that such confusion was introduced into the soul that an undivided worship was given nowhere. Is not that the effect of the Lord's Supper? I appeal now to the convictions of communicants, and ask such persons whether they have not been occasionally conscious of a painful confusion of thought between the worship due to God and the commemoration due to Christ. For the service does not stand upon the basis of a voluntary act, but is imposed by authority. It is an expression of gratitude to Christ, enjoined by Christ. There is an endeavor to keep Jesus in mind, whilst yet the prayers are addressed to God. I fear it is the effect of this ordinance to clothe Jesus with an authority which he never claimed and which distracts the mind of the worshipper. I know our opinions differ much respecting the nature and offices of

Christ, and the degree of veneration to which he is entitled. I am so much a Unitarian as this: that I believe the human mind can admit but one God, and that every effort to pay religious homage to more than one being goes to take away all right ideas. I appeal, brethren, to your individual experience. In the moment when you make the least petition to God, though it be but a silent wish that he may approve you, or add one moment to your life, — do you not, in the very act, necessarily exclude all other beings from your thought? In that act, the soul stands alone with God, and Jesus is no more present to your mind than your brother or your child.[1]

But is not Jesus called in Scripture the Mediator? He is the mediator in that only sense in which possibly any being can mediate between God and man, — that is, an instructor of man. He teaches us how to become like God. And a true disciple of Jesus will receive the light he gives most thankfully; but the thanks he offers, and which an exalted being will accept, are not compliments, commemorations, but the use of that instruction.

3. Passing other objections, I come to this, that the use of the elements, however suitable

to the people and the modes of thought in the East, where it originated, is foreign and unsuited to affect us. Whatever long usage and strong association may have done in some individuals to deaden this repulsion, I apprehend that their use is rather tolerated than loved by any of us. We are not accustomed to express our thoughts or emotions by symbolical actions. Most men find the bread and wine no aid to devotion, and to some it is a painful impediment. To eat bread is one thing; to love the precepts of Christ and resolve to obey them is quite another.'

The statement of this objection leads me to say that I think this difficulty, wherever it is felt, to be entitled to the greatest weight. It is alone a sufficient objection to the ordinance. It is my own objection. This mode of commemorating Christ is not suitable to me. That is reason enough why I should abandon it. If I believed it was enjoined by Jesus on his disciples, and that he even contemplated making permanent this mode of commemoration, every way agreeable to an Eastern mind, and yet on trial it was disagreeable to my own feelings, I should not adopt it. I should choose other ways which, as more effectual upon me, he would approve more. For I choose that

remembrances of him should be pleasing, affecting, religious. I will love him as a glorified friend, after the free way of friendship, and not pay him a stiff sign of respect, as men do those whom they fear. A passage read from his discourses, a moving provocation to works like his, any act or meeting which tends to awaken a pure thought, a flow of love, an original design of virtue, I call a worthy, a true commemoration.

4. The importance ascribed to this particular ordinance is not consistent with the spirit of Christianity. The general object and effect of the ordinance is unexceptionable. It has been, and is, I doubt not, the occasion of indefinite good; but an importance is given by Christians to it which never can belong to any form. My friends, the Apostle well assures us that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." I am not so foolish as to declaim against forms. Forms are as essential as bodies; but to exalt particular forms, to adhere to one form a moment after it is outgrown, is unreasonable, and it is alien to the spirit of Christ. If I understand the distinction of Christianity, the reason why it is to be preferred over all other systems

and is divine is this, that it is a moral system; that it presents men with truths which are their own reason, and enjoins practices that are their own justification; that if miracles may be said to have been its evidence to the first Christians, they are not its evidence to us, but the doctrines themselves; that every practice is Christian which praises itself, and every practice unchristian which condemns itself. I am not engaged to Christianity by decent forms, or saving ordinances; it is not usage, it is not what I do not understand, that binds me to it, — let these be the sandy foundations of falsehoods. What I revere and obey in it is its reality, its boundless charity, its deep interior life, the rest it gives to mind, the echo it returns to my thoughts, the perfect accord it makes with my reason through all its representation of God and His Providence; and the persuasion and courage that come out thence to lead me upward and onward. Freedom is the essence of this faith. It has for its object simply to make men good and wise. Its institutions then should be as flexible as the wants of men. That form out of which the life and suitableness have departed should be as worthless in its eyes as the dead leaves that are falling around us.

And therefore, although for the satisfaction of others I have labored to show by the history that this rite was not intended to be perpetual; although I have gone back to weigh the expressions of Paul, I feel that here is the true point of view. In the midst of considerations as to what Paul thought, and why he so thought, I cannot help feeling that it is time misspent to argue to or from his convictions, or those of Luke and John, respecting any form. I seem to lose the substance in seeking the shadow. That for which Paul lived and died so gloriously; that for which Jesus gave himself to be crucified; the end that animated the thousand martyrs and heroes who have followed his steps, was to redeem us from a formal religion, and teach us to seek our well-being in the formation of the soul. The whole world was full of idols and ordinances. The Jewish was a religion of forms; it was all body, it had no life, and the Almighty God was pleased to qualify and send forth a man to teach men that they must serve him with the heart; that only that life was religious which was thoroughly good; that sacrifice was smoke, and forms were shadows. This man lived and died true to this purpose; and now, with his blessed word and life before us,

Christians must contend that it is a matter of vital importance, — really a duty, to commemorate him by a certain form, whether that form be agreeable to their understandings or not. Is not this to make vain the gift of God? Is not this to turn back the hand on the dial? Is not this to make men, — to make ourselves, — forget that not forms, but duties; not names, but righteousness and love are enjoined; and that in the eye of God there is no other measure of the value of any one form than the measure of its use?

There remain some practical objections to the ordinance, into which I shall not now enter. There is one on which I had intended to say a few words; I mean the unfavorable relation in which it places that numerous class of persons who abstain from it merely from disinclination to the rite.

Influenced by these considerations, I have proposed to the brethren of the Church to drop the use of the elements and the claim of authority in the administration of this ordinance, and have suggested a mode in which a meeting for the same purpose might be held, free of objection.

My brethren have considered my views with

patience and candor, and have recommended, unanimously, an adherence to the present form. I have therefore been compelled to consider whether it becomes me to administer it. I am clearly of opinion I ought not. This discourse has already been so far extended that I can only say that the reason of my determination is shortly this: It is my desire, in the office of a Christian minister, to do nothing which I cannot do with my whole heart. Having said this, I have said all. I have no hostility to this institution; I am only stating my want of sympathy with it. Neither should I ever have obtruded this opinion upon other people, had I not been called by my office to administer it. That is the end of my opposition, that I am not interested in it. I am content that it stand to the end of the world, if it please men and please Heaven, and I shall rejoice in all the good it produces.

As it is the prevailing opinion and feeling in our religious community that it is an indispensable part of the pastoral office to administer this ordinance, I am about to resign into your hands that office which you have confided to me. It has many duties for which I am feebly qualified. It has some which it will always be

my delight to discharge according to my ability, wherever I exist. And whilst the recollection of its claims oppresses me with a sense of my unworthiness, I am consoled by the hope that no time and no change can deprive me of the satisfaction of pursuing and exercising its highest functions.[1]

II

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

AT CONCORD, ON THE SECOND CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN, SEPTEMBER 12, 1835

Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Merriam, Flint,
Possessed the land which rendered to their toil
Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool and wood.
Each of these landlords walked amidst his farm
Saying, 'T is mine, my children's and my name's.'

Where are these men? Asleep beneath their grounds:
And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plough.
Earth laughs in flowers, to see her boastful boys
Earth-proud, proud of the earth which is not theirs.

I WILL have never a noble,
No lineage counted great;
Fishers and choppers and ploughmen
Shall constitute a state.

Lo now! if these poor men
Can govern the land and sea
And make just laws below the sun,
As planets faithful be.

I cause from every creature
His proper good to flow:
As much as he is and doeth,
So much he shall bestow.

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

FELLOW CITIZENS: The town of Concord begins, this day, the third century of its history. By a common consent, the people of New England, for a few years past, as the second centennial anniversary of each of its early settlements arrived, have seen fit to observe the day. You have thought it becoming to commemorate the planting of the first inland town. The sentiment is just, and the practice is wise. Our ears shall not be deaf to the voice of time. We will review the deeds of our fathers, and pass that just verdict on them we expect from posterity on our own.

And yet, in the eternity of Nature, how recent our antiquities appear! The imagination is impatient of a cycle so short. Who can tell how many thousand years, every day, the clouds have shaded these fields with their purple awning? The river, by whose banks most of us were born, every winter, for ages, has spread its crust of ice over the great meadows which, in ages, it had formed. But the little society of men who now, for a few years, fish in this river, plough the fields it washes, mow the grass and

reap the corn, shortly shall hurry from its banks as did their forefathers. "Man's life," said the Witan to the Saxon king, "is the sparrow that enters at a window, flutters round the house, and flies out at another, and none knoweth whence he came, or whither he goes."[1] The more reason that we should give to our being what permanence we can; — that we should recall the Past, and expect the Future.

Yet the race survives whilst the individual dies. In the country, without any interference of the law, the agricultural life favors the permanence of families. Here are still around me the lineal descendants of the first settlers of this town. Here is Blood, Flint, Willard, Meriam, Wood, Hosmer, Barrett, Wheeler, Jones, Brown, Buttrick, Brooks, Stow, Hoar, Heywood, Hunt, Miles, — the names of the inhabitants for the first thirty years; and the family is in many cases represented, when the name is not. If the name of Bulkeley is wanting, the honor you have done me this day, in making me your organ, testifies your persevering kindness to his blood.[2]

I shall not be expected, on this occasion, to repeat the details of that oppression which drove our fathers out hither. Yet the town of Con-

cord was settled by a party of non-conformists, immediately from Great Britain. The best friend the Massachusetts colony had, though much against his will, was Archbishop Laud in England. In consequence of his famous proclamation setting up certain novelties in the rites of public worship, fifty godly ministers were suspended for contumacy, in the course of two years and a half. Hindered from speaking, some of these dared to print the reasons of their dissent, and were punished with imprisonment or mutilation.[1] This severity brought some of the best men in England to overcome that natural repugnance to emigration which holds the serious and moderate of every nation to their own soil. Among the silenced clergymen was a distinguished minister of Woodhill, in Bedfordshire, Rev. Peter Bulkeley, descended from a noble family, honored for his own virtues, his learning and gifts as a preacher, and adding to his influence the weight of a large estate.[2] Persecution readily knits friendship between its victims. Mr. Bulkeley, having turned his estate into money and set his face towards New England, was easily able to persuade a good number of planters to join him. They arrived in Boston in 1634.[3] Probably there had been a previous

correspondence with Governor Winthrop, and an agreement that they should settle at Musketaquid. With them joined Mr. Simon Willard, a merchant from Kent in England. They petitioned the General Court for a grant of a township, and on the 2d of September, 1635, corresponding in New Style to 12th September, two hundred years ago this day, leave to begin a plantation at Musketaquid was given to Peter Bulkeley, Simon Willard, and about twelve families more.[1] A month later, Rev. John Jones and a large number of settlers destined for the new town arrived in Boston.[2]

The grant of the General Court was but a preliminary step. The green meadows of Musketaquid or *Grassy Brook* were far up in the woods, not to be reached without a painful and dangerous journey through an uninterrupted wilderness. They could cross the Massachusetts or Charles River, by the ferry at Newtown; they could go up the river as far as Watertown. But the Indian paths leading up and down the country were a foot broad. They must then plunge into the thicket, and with their axes cut a road for their teams, with their women and children and their household stuff, forced to make long circuits too, to avoid hills and swamps. Edward

Johnson of Woburn has described in an affecting narrative their labors by the way. "Sometimes passing through thickets where their hands are forced to make way for their bodies' passage, and their feet clambering over the crossed trees, which when they missed, they sunk into an uncertain bottom in water, and wade up to their knees, tumbling sometimes higher, sometimes lower. At the end of this, they meet a scorching plain, yet not so plain but that the ragged bushes scratch their legs foully, even to wearing their stockings to their bare skin in two or three hours. Some of them, having no leggins, have had the blood trickle down at every step. And in time of summer, the sun casts such a reflecting heat from the sweet fern, whose scent is very strong, that some nearly fainted." They slept on the rocks, wherever the night found them. Much time was lost in travelling they knew not whither, when the sun was hidden by clouds; for "their compass miscarried in crowding through the bushes," and the Indian paths, once lost, they did not easily find.

Johnson, relating undoubtedly what he had himself heard from the pilgrims, intimates that they consumed many days in exploring the country, to select the best place for the town. Their

first temporary accommodation was rude enough. "After they have found a place of abode, they burrow themselves in the earth for their first shelter, under a hillside, and casting the soil aloft upon timbers, they make a fire against the earth, at the highest side. And thus these poor servants of Christ provide shelter for themselves, their wives and little ones, keeping off the short showers from their lodgings, but the long rains penetrate through, to their great disturbance in the night season. Yet in these poor wigwams they sing psalms, pray and praise their God, till they can provide them houses, which they could not ordinarily, till the earth, by the Lord's blessing, brought forth bread to feed them. This they attain with sore travail, every one that can lift a hoe to strike into the earth standing stoutly to his labors, and tearing up the roots and bushes from the ground, which, the first year, yielded them a lean crop, till the sod of the earth was rotten, and therefore they were forced to cut their bread very thin for a long season. But the Lord is pleased to provide for them great store of fish in the spring-time, and especially, alewives, about the bigness of a herring." [1] These served them also for manure. For flesh, they looked not for any, in those times, unless they could

barter with the Indians for venison and raccoons. "Indian corn, even the coarsest, made as pleasant meal as rice."[1] All kinds of garden fruits grew well, "and let no man," writes our pious chronicler, in another place, "make a jest of pumpkins, for with this fruit the Lord was pleased to feed his people until their corn and cattle were increased."[2]

The great cost of cattle, and the sickening of their cattle upon such wild fodder as was never cut before; the loss of their sheep and swine by wolves; the sufferings of the people in the great snows and cold soon following; and the fear of the Pequots; are the other disasters enumerated by the historian.

The hardships of the journey and of the first encampment are certainly related by their contemporary with some air of romance, yet they can scarcely be exaggerated. A march of a number of families with their stuff, through twenty miles of unknown forest, from a little rising town that had not much to spare, to an Indian town in the wilderness that had nothing, must be laborious to all, and for those who were new to the country and bred in softness, a formidable adventure. But the pilgrims had the preparation of an armed mind, better than any hardihood of

body. And the rough welcome which the new land gave them was a fit introduction to the life they must lead in it.

But what was their reception at Musketaquid? This was an old village of the Massachusetts Indians. Tahattawan, the Sachem, with Waban his son-in-law, lived near Nashawtuck, now Lee's Hill.[1] Their tribe, once numerous, the epidemic had reduced. Here they planted, hunted and fished. The moose was still trotting in the country, and of his sinews they made their bowstring. Of the pith elder, that still grows beside our brooks, they made their arrow. Of the Indian hemp they spun their nets and lines for summer angling, and, in winter, they sat around holes in the ice, catching salmon, pickerel, breams and perch, with which our river abounded.[2] Their physical powers, as our fathers found them, and before yet the English alcohol had proved more fatal to them than the English sword, astonished the white men.[3] Their sight was so excellent, that, standing on the seashore, they often told of the coming of a ship at sea, sooner by one hour, yea, two hours' sail, than any Englishman that stood by, on purpose to look out.[4] Roger Williams affirms that he has known them run between eighty and a hundred miles in a sum-

mer's day, and back again within two days. A little pounded parched corn or no-cake sufficed them on the march. To his bodily perfection, the wild man added some noble traits of character. He was open as a child to kindness and justice. Many instances of his humanity were known to the Englishmen who suffered in the woods from sickness or cold. "When you came over the morning waters," said one of the Sachems, "we took you into our arms. We fed you with our best meat. Never went white man cold and hungry from Indian wigwam."

The faithful dealing and brave good will, which, during the life of the friendly Massasoit, they uniformly experienced at Plymouth and at Boston, went to their hearts. So that the peace was made, and the ear of the savage already secured, before the pilgrims arrived at his seat of Musketaquid, to treat with him for his lands.

It is said that the covenant made with the Indians, by Mr. Bulkeley and Major Willard, was made under a great oak, formerly standing near the site of the Middlesex Hotel.[1] Our Records affirm that Squaw Sachem, Tahattawan, and Nimrod did sell a tract of six miles square to the English, receiving for the same, some fathoms of Wampumpeag, hatchets, hoes, knives,

cotton cloth and shirts. Wibbacowet, the husband of Squaw Sachem, received a suit of cloth, a hat, a white linen band, shoes, stockings and a greatcoat; and, in conclusion, the said Indians declared themselves satisfied, and told the Englishmen they were welcome. And after the bargain was concluded, Mr. Simon Willard, pointing to the four corners of the world, declared that they had bought three miles from that place, east, west, north and south.[1]

The Puritans, to keep the remembrance of their unity one with another, and of their peaceful compact with the Indians, named their forest settlement CONCORD. They proceeded to build, under the shelter of the hill that extends for a mile along the north side of the Boston road, their first dwellings. The labors of a new plantation were paid by its excitements. I seem to see them, with their pious pastor, addressing themselves to the work of clearing the land. Natives of another hemisphere, they beheld, with curiosity, all the pleasing features of the American forest. The landscape before them was fair, if it was strange and rude. The little flower which at this season stars our woods and roadsides with its profuse blooms, might attract even eyes as stern as theirs with its humble

beauty. The useful pine lifted its cones into the frosty air. The maple, which is already making the forest gay with its orange hues, reddened over those houseless men. The majestic summits of Wachusett and Monadnoc towering in the horizon, invited the steps of adventure westward.

As the season grew later, they felt its inconveniences. "Many were forced to go barefoot and bareleg, and some in time of frost and snow, yet were they more healthy than now they are." [1] The land was low but healthy; and if, in common with all the settlements, they found the air of America very cold, they might say with Higginson, after his description of the other elements, that "New England may boast of the element of fire, more than all the rest; for all Europe is not able to afford to make so great fires as New England. A poor servant, that is to possess but fifty acres, may afford to give more wood for fire as good as the world yields, than many noblemen in England." [2] Many were their wants, but more their privileges. The light struggled in through windows of oiled paper,[3] but they read the word of God by it. They were fain to make use of their knees for a table, but their limbs were their own. Hard labor and spare diet they had, and off wooden

trenchers, but they had peace and freedom, and the wailing of the tempest in the woods sounded kindlier in their ear than the smooth voice of the prelates, at home, in England. "There is no people," said their pastor to his little flock of exiles, "but will strive to excel in something. What can we excel in, if not in holiness? If we look to number, we are the fewest; if to strength, we are the weakest; if to wealth and riches, we are the poorest of all the people of God through the whole world. We cannot excel nor so much as equal other people in these things; and if we come short in grace and holiness too, we are the most despicable people under heaven. Strive we, therefore, herein to excel, and suffer not this crown to be taken away from us." [1] The sermon fell into good and tender hearts; the people conspired with their teacher. Their religion was sweetness and peace amidst toil and tears. And, as we are informed, "the edge of their appetite was greater to spiritual duties at their first coming, in time of wants, than afterwards."

The original Town Records, for the first thirty years, are lost. We have records of marriages and deaths, beginning nineteen years after the settlement; and copies of some of the doings of the town in regard to territory, of the same

date. But the original distribution of the land, or an account of the principles on which it was divided, are not preserved. Agreeably to the custom of the times, a large portion was reserved to the public, and it appears from a petition of some newcomers, in 1643, that a part had been divided among the first settlers without price, on the single condition of improving it.[1] Other portions seem to have been successively divided off and granted to individuals, at the rate of sixpence or a shilling an acre. But, in the first years, the land would not pay the necessary public charges, and they seem to have fallen heavily on the few wealthy planters. Mr. Bulkeley, by his generosity, spent his estate, and, doubtless in consideration of his charges, the General Court, in 1639, granted him 300 acres towards Cambridge; and to Mr. Spencer, probably for the like reason, 300 acres by the Alewife River. In 1638, 1200 acres were granted to Governor Winthrop, and 1000 to Thomas Dudley, of the lands adjacent to the town, and Governor Winthrop selected as a building spot the land near the house of Captain Humphrey Hunt.[2] The first record now remaining is that of a reservation of land for the minister, and the appropriation of new lands as commons or

pastures to some poor men. At the same date, in 1654, the town having divided itself into three districts, called the North, South and East quarters, ordered, "that the North quarter are to keep and maintain all their highways and bridges over the great river, in their quarter, and, in respect of the greatness of their charge thereabout, and in regard of the ease of the East quarter above the rest, in their highways, they are to allow the North quarter £3." [1]

Fellow citizens, this first recorded political act of our fathers, this tax assessed on its inhabitants by a town, is the most important event in their civil history, implying, as it does, the exercise of a sovereign power, and connected with all the immunities and powers of a corporate town in Massachusetts. The greater speed and success that distinguish the planting of the human race in this country, over all other plantations in history, owe themselves mainly to the new subdivisions of the State into small corporations of land and power. It is vain to look for the inventor. No man made them. Each of the parts of that perfect structure grew out of the necessities of an instant occasion. The germ was formed in England. The charter gave to the freemen of the Company of Massachusetts Bay the elec-

tion of the Governor and Council of Assistants. It moreover gave them the power of prescribing the manner in which freemen should be elected; and ordered that all fundamental laws should be enacted by the freemen of the colony. But the Company removed to New England; more than one hundred freemen were admitted the first year, and it was found inconvenient to assemble them all.[1] And when, presently, the design of the colony began to fulfil itself, by the settlement of new plantations in the vicinity of Boston, and parties, with grants of land, straggled into the country to truck with the Indians and to clear the land for their own benefit, the Governor and freemen in Boston found it neither desirable nor possible to control the trade and practices of these farmers. What could the body of freemen, meeting four times a year, at Boston, do for the daily wants of the planters at Musketaquid? The wolf was to be killed; the Indian to be watched and resisted; wells to be dug; the forest to be felled; pastures to be cleared; corn to be raised; roads to be cut; town and farm lines to be run. These things must be done, govern who might. The nature of man and his condition in the world, for the first time within the period of certain history, controlled the forma-

tion of the State. The necessity of the colonists wrote the law. Their wants, their poverty, their manifest convenience made them bold to ask of the Governor and of the General Court, immunities, and, to certain purposes, sovereign powers. The townsmen's words were heard and weighed, for all knew that it was a petitioner that could not be slighted; it was the river, or the winter, or famine, or the Pequots, that spoke through them to the Governor and Council of Massachusetts Bay. Instructed by necessity, each little company organized itself after the pattern of the larger town, by appointing its constable, and other petty half-military officers. As early as 1633,[1] the office of townsman or *selectman* appears, who seems first to have been appointed by the General Court, as here, at Concord, in 1639. In 1635, the Court say, "whereas particular towns have many things which concern only themselves, it is Ordered, that the freemen of every town shall have power to dispose of their own lands, and woods, and choose their own particular officers."[2] This pointed chiefly at the office of constable, but they soon chose their own selectmen, and very early assessed taxes; a power at first resisted,[3] but speedily confirmed to them.

Meantime, to this paramount necessity, a milder and more pleasing influence was joined. I esteem it the happiness of this country that its settlers, whilst they were exploring their granted and natural rights and determining the power of the magistrate, were united by personal affection. Members of a church before whose searching covenant all rank was abolished, they stood in awe of each other, as religious men. They bore to John Winthrop, the Governor, a grave but hearty kindness. For the first time, men examined the powers of the chief whom they loved and revered. For the first time, the ideal social compact was real. The bands of love and reverence held fast the little state, whilst they untied the great cords of authority to examine their soundness and learn on what wheels they ran. They were to settle the internal constitution of the towns, and, at the same time, their power in the commonwealth. The Governor conspires with them in limiting his claims to their obedience, and values much more their love than his chartered authority. The disputes between that forbearing man and the deputies are like the quarrels of girls, so much do they turn upon complaints of unkindness, and end in such loving reconciliations. It was on doubts

concerning their own power, that, in 1634, a committee repaired to him for counsel, and he advised, seeing the freemen were grown so numerous, to send deputies from every town once in a year to revise the laws and to assess all monies.[1] And the General Court, thus constituted, only needed to go into separate session from the Council, as they did in 1644,[2] to become essentially the same assembly they are this day.

By this course of events, Concord and the other plantations found themselves separate and independent of Boston, with certain rights of their own, which, what they were, time alone could fully determine; enjoying, at the same time, a strict and loving fellowship with Boston, and sure of advice and aid, on every emergency. Their powers were speedily settled by obvious convenience, and the towns learned to exercise a sovereignty in the laying of taxes; in the choice of their deputy to the house of representatives; in the disposal of the town lands; in the care of public worship, the school and the poor; and, what seemed of at least equal importance, to exercise the right of expressing an opinion on every question before the country. In a town-meeting, the great secret of political science was uncovered, and the problem solved,

how to give every individual his fair weight in the government, without any disorder from numbers. In a town-meeting, the roots of society were reached. Here the rich gave counsel, but the poor also; and moreover, the just and the unjust. He is ill informed who expects, on running down the Town Records for two hundred years, to find a church of saints, a metropolis of patriots, enacting wholesome and creditable laws. The constitution of the towns forbid it. In this open democracy, every opinion had utterance; every objection, every fact, every acre of land, every bushel of rye, its entire weight. The moderator was the passive mouth-piece, and the vote of the town, like the vane on the turret overhead, free for every wind to turn, and always turned by the last and strongest breath. In these assemblies, the public weal, the call of interest, duty, religion, were heard; and every local feeling, every private grudge, every suggestion of petulance and ignorance, were not less faithfully produced. Wrath and love came up to town-meeting in company. By the law of 1641, every man — freeman or not — inhabitant or not — might introduce any business into a public meeting. Not a complaint occurs in all the volumes of our Records, of any inhabitant being

hindered from speaking, or suffering from any violence or usurpation of any class. The negative ballot of a ten-shilling freeholder was as fatal as that of the honored owner of Blood's Farms or Willard's Purchase. A man felt himself at liberty to exhibit, at town-meeting, feelings and actions that he would have been ashamed of anywhere but amongst his neighbors. Individual protests are frequent. Peter Wright [1705] desired his dissent might be recorded from the town's grant to John Shepard.[1] In 1795, several town-meetings are called, upon the compensation to be made to a few proprietors for land taken in making a bridle-road; and one of them demanding large damages, many offers were made him in town-meeting, and refused; "which the town thought very unreasonable." The matters there debated are such as to invite very small considerations. The ill-spelled pages of the Town Records contain the result. I shall be excused for confessing that I have set a value upon any symptom of meanness and private pique which I have met with in these antique books, as proof that justice was done; that if the results of our history are approved as wise and good, it was yet a free strife; if the good counsel prevailed, the sneaking counsel did not

fail to be suggested; freedom and virtue, if they triumphed, triumphed in a fair field. And so be it an everlasting testimony for them, and so much ground of assurance of man's capacity for self-government.

It is the consequence of this institution that not a school-house, a public pew, a bridge, a pound, a mill-dam, hath been set up, or pulled down, or altered, or bought, or sold, without the whole population of this town having a voice in the affair. A general contentment is the result. And the people truly feel that they are lords of the soil. In every winding road, in every stone fence, in the smokes of the poor-house chimney, in the clock on the church, they read their own power, and consider, at leisure, the wisdom and error of their judgments.

The British government has recently presented to the several public libraries of this country, copies of the splendid edition of the Domesday Book, and other ancient public records of England. I cannot but think that it would be a suitable acknowledgment of this national munificence, if the records of one of our towns, — of this town, for example, — should be printed, and presented to the governments of Europe; to the English nation, as

a thank-offering, and as a certificate of the progress of the Saxon race; to the Continental nations as a lesson of humanity and love. Tell them, the Union has twenty-four States, and Massachusetts is one. Tell them, Massachusetts has three hundred towns, and Concord is one; that in Concord are five hundred ratable polls, and every one has an equal vote.

About ten years after the planting of Concord, efforts began to be made to civilize the Indians, and "to win them to the knowledge of the true God." This indeed, in so many words, is expressed in the charter of the colony as one of its ends; and this design is named first in the printed "Considerations,"[1] that inclined Hampden, and determined Winthrop and his friends, to come hither. The interest of the Puritans in the natives was heightened by a suspicion at that time prevailing that these were the lost ten tribes of Israel. The man of the woods might well draw on himself the compassion of the planters. His erect and perfect form, though disclosing some irregular virtues, was found joined to a dwindled soul. Master of all sorts of wood-craft, he seemed a part of the forest and the lake, and the secret of his amazing skill seemed to be that he partook of

the nature and fierce instincts of the beasts he slew. Those who dwelled by ponds and rivers had some tincture of civility, but the hunters of the tribe were found intractable at catechism. Thomas Hooker anticipated the opinion of Humboldt, and called them "the ruins of mankind."

Early efforts were made to instruct them, in which Mr. Bulkeley, Mr. Flint, and Captain Willard, took an active part. In 1644, Squaw Sachem, the widow of Nanepashemet, the great Sachem of Concord and Mystic, with two sachems of Wachusett, made a formal submission to the English government, and intimated their desire, "as opportunity served, and the English lived among them, to learn to read God's word, and know God aright;" and the General Court acted on their request.[1] John Eliot, in October, 1646, preached his first sermon in the Indian language at Noonantum; Waban, Tahattawan, and their sannaps, going thither from Concord to hear him. There under the rubbish and ruins of barbarous life, the human heart heard the voice of love, and awoke as from a sleep. The questions which the Indians put betray their reason and their ignorance. "Can Jesus Christ understand prayers in the Indian language?"

"If a man be wise, and his sachem weak, must he obey him?" At a meeting which Eliot gave to the squaws apart, the wife of Wampooas propounded the question, "Whether do I pray when my husband prays, if I speak nothing as he doth, yet if I like what he saith?" — "which questions were accounted of by some, as part of the whitenings of the harvest toward."[1] Tahattawan, our Concord sachem, called his Indians together, and bid them not oppose the courses which the English were taking for their good; for, said he, all the time you have lived after the Indian fashion, under the power of the higher sachems, what did they care for you? They took away your skins, your kettles and your wampum, at their own pleasure, and this was all they regarded. But you may see the English mind no such things, but only seek your welfare, and instead of taking away, are ready to give to you. Tahattawan and his son-in-law Waban, besought Eliot to come and preach to them at Concord, and here they entered, by his assistance, into an agreement to twenty-nine rules, all breathing a desire to conform themselves to English customs.[2] They requested to have a town given them within the bounds of Concord, near unto

the English. When this question was propounded by Tahattawan, he was asked, why he desired a town so near, when there was more room for them up in the country? The sachem replied that he knew if the Indians dwelt far from the English, they would not so much care to pray, nor could they be so ready to hear the word of God, but would be, all one, Indians still; but dwelling near the English, he hoped it might be otherwise with them then. We, who see in the squalid remnants of the twenty tribes of Massachusetts, the final failure of this benevolent enterprise, can hardly learn without emotion the earnestness with which the most sensible individuals of the copper race held on to the new hope they had conceived, of being elevated to equality with their civilized brother. It is piteous to see their self-distrust in their request to remain near the English, and their unanimous entreaty to Captain Willard, to be their Recorder, being very solicitous that what they did agree upon might be faithfully kept without alteration. It was remarkable that the preaching was not wholly new to them. "Their forefathers," the Indians told Eliot, "did know God, but after this, they fell into a deep sleep, and when they did awake, they quite forgot him."[1]

At the instance of Eliot, in 1651, their desire was granted by the General Court, and Nashobah, lying near Nagog Pond, now partly in Littleton, partly in Acton, became an Indian town, where a Christian worship was established under an Indian ruler and teacher. Wilson relates that, at their meetings, "the Indians sung a psalm, made Indian by Eliot, in one of our ordinary English tunes, melodiously." [1] Such was, for half a century, the success of the general enterprise, that, in 1676, there were five hundred and sixty-seven praying Indians, and in 1689, twenty-four Indian preachers, and eighteen assemblies.

Meantime, Concord increased in territory and population. The lands were divided; highways were cut from farm to farm, and from this town to Boston. A military company had been organized in 1636. The Pequots, the terror of the farmer, were exterminated in 1637. Captain Underhill, in 1638, declared, that "the new plantations of Dedham and Concord do afford large accommodation, and will contain abundance of people." [2] In 1639, our first selectmen, Mr. Flint, Lieutenant Willard, and Richard Griffin were appointed. And in 1640, when the colony rate was £1200, Concord was assessed £50.[3] The country already began to yield more than

was consumed by the inhabitants.[1] The very great immigration from England made the lands more valuable every year, and supplied a market for the produce. In 1643, the colony was so numerous that it became expedient to divide it into four counties, Concord being included in Middlesex.[2] In 1644, the town contained sixty families.

But, in 1640, all immigration ceased, and the country produce and farm-stock depreciated.[3] Other difficulties accrued. The fish, which had been the abundant manure of the settlers, was found to injure the land.[4] The river, at this period, seems to have caused some distress now by its overflow, now by its drought.[5] A cold and wet summer blighted the corn; enormous flocks of pigeons beat down and eat up all sorts of English grain; and the crops suffered much from mice.[6] New plantations and better land had been opened, far and near; and whilst many of the colonists at Boston thought to remove, or did remove to England, the Concord people became uneasy, and looked around for new seats. In 1643, one seventh or one eighth part of the inhabitants went to Connecticut with Reverend Mr. Jones, and settled Fairfield. Weakened by this loss, the people begged to be released from

a part of their rates, to which the General Court consented. Mr. Bulkeley dissuaded his people from removing, and admonished them to increase their faith with their griefs. Even this check which befell them acquaints us with the rapidity of their growth, for the good man, in dealing with his people, taxes them with luxury. "We pretended to come hither," he says, "for ordinances; but now ordinances are light matters with us; we are turned after the prey. We have among us excess and pride of life; pride in apparel, daintiness in diet, and that in those who, in times past, would have been satisfied with bread. *This is the sin of the lowest of the people.*" [1] Better evidence could not be desired of the rapid growth of the settlement.

The check was but momentary. The earth teemed with fruits. The people on the bay built ships, and found the way to the West Indies, with pipe-staves, lumber and fish; and the country people speedily learned to supply themselves with sugar, tea and molasses. The college had been already gathered in 1638. Now the schoolhouse went up. The General Court, in 1647, "to the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our forefathers, Ordered, that every township, after the Lord had increased them to

the number of fifty house-holders, shall appoint one to teach all children to write and read; and where any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families, they shall set up a Grammar school, the masters thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the University." With these requirements Concord not only complied, but, in 1653, subscribed a sum for several years to the support of Harvard College.[1]

But a new and alarming public distress retarded the growth of this, as of the sister towns, during more than twenty years from 1654 to 1676. In 1654, the four united New England Colonies agreed to raise 270 foot and 40 horse, to reduce Ninigret, Sachem of the Niantics, and appointed Major Simon Willard, of this town, to the command.[2] This war seems to have been pressed by three of the colonies, and reluctantly entered by Massachusetts. Accordingly, Major Willard did the least he could, and incurred the censure of the Commissioners, who write to their "loving friend Major Willard," "that they leave to his consideration the inconveniences arising from his non-attendance to his commission."[3] This expedition was but the introduction of the war with King Philip. In 1670, the Wampanoags

began to grind their hatchets, and mend their guns, and insult the English. Philip surrendered seventy guns to the Commissioners in Taunton Meeting-house,[1] but revenged his humiliation a few years after, by carrying fire and the tomahawk into the English villages. From Narragansett to the Connecticut River, the scene of war was shifted as fast as these red hunters could traverse the forest. Concord was a military post. The inactivity of Major Willard, in Ninigret's war, had lost him no confidence. He marched from Concord to Brookfield, in season to save the people whose houses had been burned, and who had taken shelter in a fortified house.[2] But he fought with disadvantage against an enemy who must be hunted before every battle. Some flourishing towns were burned. John Monoco, a formidable savage, boasted that "he had burned Medfield and Lancaster, and would burn Groton, Concord, Watertown and Boston;" adding, "what me will, me do." He did burn Groton, but before he had executed the remainder of his threat he was hanged, in Boston, in September, 1676.[3]

A still more formidable enemy was removed, in the same year, by the capture of Canonchet, the faithful ally of Philip, who was soon afterwards shot at Stonington. He stoutly declared

to the Commissioners that "he would not deliver up a Wampanoag, nor the paring of a Wampanoag's nail," and when he was told that his sentence was death, he said "he liked it well that he was to die before his heart was soft, or he had spoken anything unworthy of himself." [1]

We know beforehand who must conquer in that unequal struggle. The red man may destroy here and there a straggler, as a wild beast may; he may fire a farm-house, or a village; but the association of the white men and their arts of war give them an overwhelming advantage, and in the first blast of their trumpet we already hear the flourish of victory. I confess what chiefly interests me, in the annals of that war, is the grandeur of spirit exhibited by a few of the Indian chiefs. A nameless Wampanoag who was put to death by the Mohicans, after cruel tortures, was asked by his butchers, during the torture, how he liked the war? — he said, "he found it as sweet as sugar was to Englishmen." [2]

The only compensation which war offers for its manifold mischiefs, is in the great personal qualities to which it gives scope and occasion. The virtues of patriotism and of prodigious courage and address were exhibited on both sides, and, in many instances, by women. The

historian of Concord has preserved an instance of the resolution of one of the daughters of the town. Two young farmers, Abraham and Isaac Shepherd, had set their sister Mary, a girl of fifteen years, to watch whilst they threshed grain in the barn. The Indians stole upon her before she was aware, and her brothers were slain. She was carried captive into the Indian country, but, at night, whilst her captors were asleep, she plucked a saddle from under the head of one of them, took a horse they had stolen from Lancaster, and having girt the saddle on, she mounted, swam across the Nashua River, and rode through the forest to her home.[1]

With the tragical end of Philip, the war ended. Beleaguered in his own country, his corn cut down, his piles of meal and other provision wasted by the English, it was only a great thaw in January, that, melting the snow and opening the earth, enabled his poor followers to come at the ground-nuts, else they had starved. Hunted by Captain Church, he fled from one swamp to another; his brother, his uncle, his sister, and his beloved squaw being taken or slain, he was at last shot down by an Indian deserter, as he fled alone in the dark of the morning, not far from his own fort.[2]

Concord suffered little from the war. This is to be attributed no doubt, in part, to the fact that troops were generally quartered here, and that it was the residence of many noted soldiers. Tradition finds another cause in the sanctity of its minister. The elder Bulkeley was gone. In 1659,[1] his bones were laid at rest in the forest. But the mantle of his piety and of the people's affection fell upon his son Edward,[2] the fame of whose prayers, it is said, once saved Concord from an attack of the Indian.[3] A great defence undoubtedly was the village of Praying Indians, until this settlement fell a victim to the envenomed prejudice against their countrymen. The worst feature in the history of those years, is, that no man spake for the Indian. When the Dutch, or the French, or the English royalist disagreed with the Colony, there was always found a Dutch, or French, or tory party, — an earnest minority, — to keep things from extremity. But the Indian seemed to inspire such a feeling as the wild beast inspires in the people near his den. It is the misfortune of Concord to have permitted a disgraceful outrage upon the friendly Indians settled within its limits, in February, 1676, which ended in their forcible expulsion from the town.[4]

This painful incident is but too just an example of the measure which the Indians have generally received from the whites. For them the heart of charity, of humanity, was stone. After Philip's death, their strength was irrecoverably broken. They never more disturbed the interior settlements, and a few vagrant families, that are now pensioners on the bounty of Massachusetts, are all that is left of the twenty tribes.

"Alas! for them — their day is o'er,
Their fires are out from hill and shore,
No more for them the wild deer bounds,
The plough is on their hunting grounds;
The pale man's axe rings in their woods,
The pale man's sail skims o'er their floods,
Their pleasant springs are dry." [1]

I turn gladly to the progress of our civil history. Before 1666, 15,000 acres had been added by grants of the General Court to the original territory of the town,[2] so that Concord then included the greater part of the towns of Bedford, Acton, Lincoln and Carlisle.

In the great growth of the country, Concord participated, as is manifest from its increasing polls and increased rates. Randolph at this period writes to the English government, concerning the country towns; "The farmers are

numerous and wealthy, live in good houses; are given to hospitality; and make good advantage by their corn, cattle, poultry, butter and cheese."[1] Edward Bulkeley was the pastor, until his death, in 1696. His youngest brother, Peter, was deputy from Concord, and was chosen speaker of the house of deputies in 1676. The following year, he was sent to England, with Mr. Stoughton, as agent for the Colony; and on his return, in 1685, was a royal councillor. But I am sorry to find that the servile Randolph speaks of him with marked respect.[2] It would seem that his visit to England had made him a courtier. In 1689, Concord partook of the general indignation of the province against Andros. A company marched to the capital under Lieutenant Heald, forming a part of that body concerning which we are informed, "the country people came armed into Boston, on the afternoon (of Thursday, 18th April) in such rage and heat, as made us all tremble to think what would follow; for nothing would satisfy them but that the governor must be bound in chains or cords, and put in a more secure place, and that they would see done before they went away; and to satisfy them he was guarded by them to the fort."[3] But the Town Records of that day confine themselves to descriptions of lands,

and to conferences with the neighboring towns to run boundary lines. In 1699, so broad was their territory, I find the selectmen running the lines with Chelmsford, Cambridge and Watertown.[1] Some interesting peculiarities in the manners and customs of the time appear in the town's books. Proposals of marriage were made by the parents of the parties, and minutes of such private agreements sometimes entered on the clerk's records.[2] The public charity seems to have been bestowed in a manner now obsolete. The town lends its commons as pastures, to poor men ; and "being informed of the great present want of Thomas Pellit, gave order to Stephen Hosmer to deliver a town cow, of a black color, with a white face, unto said Pellit, for his present supply."[3]

From the beginning to the middle of the eighteenth century, our records indicate no interruption of the tranquillity of the inhabitants, either in church or in civil affairs. After the death of Rev. Mr. Estabrook, in 1711, it was propounded at the town-meeting, "whether one of the three gentlemen lately improved here in preaching, namely, Mr. John Whiting, Mr. Holyoke and Mr. Prescott, shall be now chosen in the work of the ministry? Voted affirmatively."[4] Mr. Whiting, who was chosen, was, we are told in

his epitaph, "a universal lover of mankind." The charges of education and of legislation, at this period, seem to have afflicted the town; for they vote to petition the General Court to be eased of the law relating to providing a schoolmaster; happily, the Court refused; and in 1712, the selectmen agreed with Captain James Minott, "for his son Timothy to keep the school at the school-house for the town of Concord, for half a year beginning 2d June; and if any scholar shall come, within the said time, for larning exceeding his son's ability, the said Captain doth agree to instruct them himself in the tongues, till the above said time be fulfilled; for which service, the town is to pay Captain Minott ten pounds." Captain Minott seems to have served our prudent fathers in the double capacity of teacher and representative. It is an article in the selectmen's warrant for the town-meeting, "to see if the town will lay in for a representative not exceeding four pounds." Captain Minott was chosen, and after the General Court was adjourned received of the town for his services, an allowance of three shillings per day. The country was not yet so thickly settled but that the inhabitants suffered from wolves and wildcats, which infested the woods; since bounties of

twenty shillings are given as late as 1735, to Indians and whites, for the heads of these animals, after the constable has cut off the ears.[1]

Mr. Whiting was succeeded in the pastoral office by Rev. Daniel Bliss, in 1738. Soon after his ordination, the town seems to have been divided by ecclesiastical discords. In 1741, the celebrated Whitfield preached here, in the open air, to a great congregation.[2] Mr. Bliss heard that great orator with delight, and by his earnest sympathy with him, in opinion and practice, gave offence to a part of his people. Party and mutual councils were called, but no grave charge was made good against him. I find, in the Church Records, the charges preferred against him, his answer thereto, and the result of the Council. The charges seem to have been made by the lovers of order and moderation against Mr. Bliss, as a favorer of religious excitements. His answer to one of the counts breathes such true piety that I cannot forbear to quote it. The ninth allegation is "That in praying for himself, in a church-meeting, in December last, he said, 'he was a poor vile worm of the dust, that was allowed as Mediator between God and this people.'" To this Mr. Bliss replied, "In the prayer you speak of, Jesus Christ was acknowledged as

the only Mediator between God and man; at which time, I was filled with wonder, that such a sinful and worthless worm as I am, was allowed to represent Christ, in any manner, even so far as to be bringing the petitions and thank-offerings of the people unto God, and God's will and truths to the people; and used the word Mediator in some differing light from that you have given it; but I confess I was soon uneasy that I had used the word, lest some would put a wrong meaning thereupon." [1] The Council admonished Mr. Bliss of some improprieties of expression, but bore witness to his purity and fidelity in his office. In 1764, Whitfield preached again at Concord, on Sunday afternoon; Mr. Bliss preached in the morning, and the Concord people thought their minister gave them the better sermon of the two. It was also his last.[2]

The planting of the colony was the effect of religious principle. The Revolution was the fruit of another principle, — the devouring thirst for justice. From the appearance of the article in the Selectmen's warrant, in 1765, "to see if the town will give the Representative any instructions about any important affair to be transacted by the General Court, concerning the Stamp Act," [3] to the peace of 1783, the Town Records

breathe a resolute and warlike spirit, so bold from the first as hardly to admit of increase.

It would be impossible on this occasion to recite all these patriotic papers. I must content myself with a few brief extracts. On the 24th January, 1774, in answer to letters received from the united committees of correspondence, in the vicinity of Boston, the town say:

"We cannot possibly view with indifference the past and present obstinate endeavors of the enemies of this, as well as the mother country, to rob us of those rights, that are the distinguishing glory and felicity of this land; rights, that we are obliged to no power, under heaven, for the enjoyment of; as they are the fruit of the heroic enterprises of the first settlers of these American colonies. And though we cannot but be alarmed at the great majority, in the British parliament, for the imposition of unconstitutional taxes on the colonies, yet, it gives life and strength to every attempt to oppose them, that not only the people of this, but the neighboring provinces are remarkably united in the important and interesting opposition, which, as it succeeded before, in some measure, by the blessing of heaven, so, we cannot but hope it will be attended with still greater success, in future.

"*Resolved*, That these colonies have been and still are illegally taxed by the British parliament, as they are not virtually represented therein.

"That the purchasing commodities subject to such illegal taxation is an explicit, though an impious and sordid resignation of the liberties of this free and happy people.

"That, as the British parliament have empowered the East India Company to export their tea into America, for the sole purpose of raising a revenue from hence; to render the design abortive, we will not, in this town, either by ourselves, or any from or under us, buy, sell, or use any of the East India Company's tea, or any other tea, whilst there is a duty for raising a revenue thereon in America; neither will we suffer any such tea to be used in our families.

"That all such persons as shall purchase, sell, or use any such tea, shall, for the future, be deemed unfriendly to the happy constitution of this country.

"That, in conjunction with our brethren in America, we will risk our fortunes, and even our lives, in defence of his majesty, King George the Third, his person, crown and dignity; and will, also, with the same resolution, as his free-born subjects in this country, to the utmost of

our power, defend all our rights inviolate to the latest posterity.

"That, if any person or persons, inhabitants of this province, so long as there is a duty on tea, shall import any tea from the India House, in England, or be factors for the East India Company, we will treat them, in an eminent degree, as enemies to their country, and with contempt and detestation.

"That we think it our duty, at this critical time of our public affairs, to return our hearty thanks to the town of Boston, for every rational measure they have taken for the preservation or recovery of our invaluable rights and liberties infringed upon; and we hope, should the state of our public affairs require it, that they will still remain watchful and persevering; with a steady zeal to espy out everything that shall have a tendency to subvert our happy constitution."[1]

On the 27th June, near three hundred persons, upwards of twenty-one years of age, inhabitants of Concord, entered into a covenant, "solemnly engaging with each other, in the presence of God, to suspend all commercial intercourse with Great Britain, until the act for blocking the harbor of Boston be repealed; and

neither to buy nor consume any merchandise imported from Great Britain, nor to deal with those who do." [1]

In August, a County Convention met in this town, to deliberate upon the alarming state of public affairs, and published an admirable report.[2] In September, incensed at the new royal law which made the judges dependent on the crown, the inhabitants assembled on the common, and forbade the justices to open the court of sessions. This little town then assumed the sovereignty. It was judge and jury and council and king. On the 26th of the month, the whole town resolved itself into a committee of safety, "to suppress all riots, tumults, and disorders in said town, and to aid all untainted magistrates in the execution of the laws of the land." It was then voted, to raise one or more companies of minute-men, by enlistment, to be paid by the town whenever called out of town; and to provide arms and ammunition, "that those who are unable to purchase them themselves, may have the advantage of them, if necessity calls for it." In October, the Provincial Congress met in Concord. John Hancock was President. This body was composed of the foremost patriots, and adopted those efficient

measures whose progress and issue belong to the history of the nation.[1]

The clergy of New England were, for the most part, zealous promoters of the Revolution. A deep religious sentiment sanctified the thirst for liberty. All the military movements in this town were solemnized by acts of public worship. In January, 1775, a meeting was held for the enlisting of minute-men. Reverend William Emerson, the chaplain of the Provincial Congress, preached to the people. Sixty men enlisted and, in a few days, many more. On 13th March, at a general review of all the military companies, he preached to a very full assembly, taking for his text, 2 Chronicles xiii. 12, "And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you."[2] It is said that all the services of that day made a deep impression on the people, even to the singing of the psalm.

A large amount of military stores had been deposited in this town, by order of the Provincial Committee of Safety. It was to destroy those stores that the troops who were attacked in this town, on the 19th April, 1775, were sent hither by General Gage.

The story of that day is well known. In

these peaceful fields, for the first time since a hundred years, the drum and alarm-gun were heard, and the farmers snatched down their rusty firelocks from the kitchen walls, to make good the resolute words of their town debates. In the field where the western abutment of the old bridge may still be seen, about half a mile from this spot, the first organized resistance was made to the British arms. There the Americans first shed British blood. Eight hundred British soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Smith, had marched from Boston to Concord; at Lexington had fired upon the brave handful of militia, for which a speedy revenge was reaped by the same militia in the afternoon. When they entered Concord, they found the militia and minute-men assembled under the command of Colonel Barrett and Major Buttrick. This little battalion, though in their hasty council some were urgent to stand their ground, retreated before the enemy to the high land on the other bank of the river, to wait for reinforcement. Colonel Barrett ordered the troops not to fire, unless fired upon. The British following them across the bridge, posted two companies, amounting to about one hundred men, to guard the bridge, and secure the return

of the plundering party. Meantime, the men of Acton, Bedford, Lincoln and Carlisle, all once included in Concord, remembering their parent town in the hour of danger, arrived and fell into the ranks so fast, that Major Buttrick found himself superior in number to the enemy's party at the bridge. And when the smoke began to rise from the village where the British were burning cannon-carriages and military stores, the Americans resolved to force their way into town. The English beginning to pluck up some of the planks of the bridge, the Americans quickened their pace, and the British fired one or two shots up the river (our ancient friend here, Master Blood,[1] saw the water struck by the first ball); then a single gun, the ball from which wounded Luther Blanchard and Jonas Brown, and then a volley, by which Captain Isaac Davis and Abner Hosmer of Acton were instantly killed. Major Buttrick leaped from the ground, and gave the command to fire, which was repeated in a simultaneous cry by all his men. The Americans fired, and killed two men and wounded eight. A head-stone and a foot-stone, on this bank of the river, mark the place where these first victims lie.[2] The British retreated immediately towards the

village, and were joined by two companies of grenadiers, whom the noise of the firing had hastened to the spot. The militia and minute-men — every one from that moment being his own commander — ran over the hills opposite the battle-field, and across the great fields, into the east quarter of the town, to waylay the enemy, and annoy his retreat. The British, as soon as they were rejoined by the plundering detachment, began that disastrous retreat to Boston, which was an omen to both parties of the event of the war.

In all the anecdotes of that day's events we may discern the natural action of the people. It was not an extravagant ebullition of feeling, but might have been calculated on by any one acquainted with the spirits and habits of our community. Those poor farmers who came up, that day, to defend their native soil, acted from the simplest instincts. They did not know it was a deed of fame they were doing. These men did not babble of glory. They never dreamed their children would contend who had done the most. They supposed they had a right to their corn and their cattle, without paying tribute to any but their own governors. And as they had no fear of man, they yet did have a fear of

God. Captain Charles Miles, who was wounded in the pursuit of the enemy, told my venerable friend who sits by me, that "he went to the services of that day, with the same seriousness and acknowledgment of God, which he carried to church."[1]

The presence of these aged men who were in arms on that day seems to bring us nearer to it. The benignant Providence which has prolonged their lives to this hour gratifies the strong curiosity of the new generation. The Pilgrims are gone; but we see what manner of persons they were who stood in the worst perils of the Revolution. We hold by the hand the last of the invincible men of old, and confirm from living lips the sealed records of time.

And you, my fathers, whom God and the history of your country have ennobled, may well bear a chief part in keeping this peaceful birthday of our town. You are indeed extraordinary heroes. If ever men in arms had a spotless cause, you had. You have fought a good fight. And having quit you like men in the battle, you have quit yourselves like men in your virtuous families; in your cornfields; and in society. We will not hide your honorable gray hairs under perishing laurel-leaves, but the eye of affection and

veneration follows you. You are set apart — and forever — for the esteem and gratitude of the human race. To you belongs a better badge than stars and ribbons. This prospering country is your ornament, and this expanding nation is multiplying your praise with millions of tongues.[1]

The agitating events of those days were duly remembered in the church. On the second day after the affray, divine service was attended, in this house, by 700 soldiers. William Emerson, the pastor, had a hereditary claim to the affection of the people, being descended in the fourth generation from Edward Bulkeley, son of Peter. But he had merits of his own. The cause of the Colonies was so much in his heart that he did not cease to make it the subject of his preaching and his prayers, and is said to have deeply inspired many of his people with his own enthusiasm. He, at least, saw clearly the pregnant consequences of the 19th April. I have found within a few days, among some family papers, his almanac of 1775, in a blank leaf of which he has written a narrative of the fight;[2] and at the close of the month, he writes, "This month remarkable for the greatest events of the present age." To promote the same cause, he asked, and obtained of the town, leave to accept the

commission of chaplain to the Northern army, at Ticonderoga, and died, after a few months, of the distemper that prevailed in the camp.[1]

In the whole course of the war the town did not depart from this pledge it had given. Its little population of 1300 souls behaved like a party to the contest. The number of its troops constantly in service is very great. Its pecuniary burdens are out of all proportion to its capital. The economy so rigid, which marked its earlier history, has all vanished. It spends profusely, affectionately, in the service. "Since," say the plaintive records, "General Washington, at Cambridge, is not able to give but 24s. per cord for wood, for the army; it is Voted, that this town encourage the inhabitants to supply the army, by paying two dollars per cord, over and above the General's price, to such as shall carry wood thither;"[2] and 210 cords of wood were carried. A similar order is taken respecting hay. Whilst Boston was occupied by the British troops, Concord contributed to the relief of the inhabitants, £70, in money; 225 bushels of grain; and a quantity of meat and wood. When, presently, the poor of Boston were quartered by the Provincial Congress on the neighboring country, Concord received 82 persons to its hospitality.

In the year 1775, it raised 100 minute-men, and 74 soldiers to serve at Cambridge. In March, 1776, 145 men were raised by this town to serve at Dorchester Heights.[1] In June, the General Assembly of Massachusetts resolved to raise 5000 militia for six months, to reinforce the Continental army. "The numbers," say they, "are large, but this Court has the fullest assurance that their brethren, on this occasion, will not confer with flesh and blood, but will, without hesitation, and with the utmost alacrity and despatch, fill up the numbers proportioned to the several towns."[2] On that occasion, Concord furnished 67 men, paying them itself, at an expense of £622. And so on, with every levy, to the end of the war. For these men it was continually providing shoes, stockings, shirts, coats, blankets and beef. The taxes, which, before the war, had not much exceeded £200 per annum, amounted, in the year 1782, to $9544, in silver.[3]

The great expense of the war was borne with cheerfulness, whilst the war lasted; but years passed, after the peace, before the debt was paid. As soon as danger and injury ceased, the people were left at leisure to consider their poverty and their debts. The Town Records show how slowly

the inhabitants recovered from the strain of excessive exertion. Their instructions to their representatives are full of loud complaints of the disgraceful state of public credit, and the excess of public expenditure. They may be pardoned, under such distress, for the mistakes of an extreme frugality. They fell into a common error, not yet dismissed to the moon, that the remedy was, to forbid the great importation of foreign commodities, and to prescribe by law the prices of articles. The operation of a new government was dreaded, lest it should prove expensive, and the country towns thought it would be cheaper if it were removed from the capital. They were jealous lest the General Court should pay itself too liberally, and our fathers must be forgiven by their charitable posterity, if, in 1782, before choosing a representative, it was "Voted, that the person who should be chosen representative to the General Court should receive 6s. per day, whilst in actual service, an account of which time he should bring to the town, and if it should be that the General Court should resolve, that, their pay should be more than 6s., then the representative shall be hereby directed to pay the overplus into the town treasury." [1] This was securing the prudence of the public servants.

But whilst the town had its own full share of the public distress, it was very far from desiring relief at the cost of order and law. In 1786, when the general sufferings drove the people in parts of Worcester and Hampshire counties to insurrection, a large party of armed insurgents arrived in this town, on the 12th September, to hinder the sitting of the Court of Common Pleas. But they found no countenance here.[1] The same people who had been active in a County Convention to consider grievances, condemned the rebellion, and joined the authorities in putting it down.[2] In 1787, the admirable instructions given by the town to its representative are a proud monument of the good sense and good feeling that prevailed. The grievances ceased with the adoption of the Federal Constitution. The constitution of Massachusetts had been already accepted. It was put to the town of Concord, in October, 1776, by the Legislature, whether the existing house of representatives should enact a constitution for the State? The town answered No.[3] The General Court, notwithstanding, draughted a constitution, sent it here, and asked the town whether they would have it for the law of the State? The town answered No, by a unanimous vote. In 1780, a

constitution of the State, proposed by the Convention chosen for that purpose, was accepted by the town with the reservation of some articles.[1] And, in 1788, the town, by its delegate, accepted the new Constitution of the United States, and this event closed the whole series of important public events in which this town played a part.

From that time to the present hour, this town has made a slow but constant progress in population and wealth, and the arts of peace. It has suffered neither from war, nor pestilence, nor famine, nor flagrant crime. Its population, in the census of 1830, was 2020 souls. The public expenses, for the last year, amounted to $4290; for the present year, to $5040.[2] If the community stints its expense in small matters, it spends freely on great duties. The town raises, this year, $1800 for its public schools; besides about $1200 which are paid, by subscription, for private schools. This year, it expends $800 for its poor; the last year it expended $900. Two religious societies, of differing creed, dwell together in good understanding, both promoting, we hope, the cause of righteousness and love.[3] Concord has always been noted for its ministers. The living need no praise of mine.

Yet it is among the sources of satisfaction and gratitude, this day, that the aged with whom is wisdom, our fathers' counsellor and friend, is spared to counsel and intercede for the sons.[1]

Such, fellow citizens, is an imperfect sketch of the history of Concord. I have been greatly indebted, in preparing this sketch, to the printed but unpublished History of this town, furnished me by the unhesitating kindness of its author, long a resident in this place. I hope that History will not long remain unknown. The author has done us and posterity a kindness, by the zeal and patience of his research, and has wisely enriched his pages with the resolutions, addresses and instructions to its agents, which from time to time, at critical periods, the town has voted.[2] Meantime, I have read with care the Town Records themselves. They must ever be the fountains of all just information respecting your character and customs. They are the history of the town. They exhibit a pleasing picture of a community almost exclusively agricultural, where no man has much time for words, in his search after things ; of a community of great simplicity of manners, and of a manifest love of justice. For the most part, the town has deserved the name it wears. I find our annals marked

with a uniform good sense. I find no ridiculous laws, no eavesdropping legislators, no hanging of witches, no ghosts, no whipping of Quakers, no unnatural crimes. The tone of the Records rises with the dignity of the event. These soiled and musty books are luminous and electric within. The old town clerks did not spell very correctly, but they contrive to make pretty intelligible the will of a free and just community. Frugal our fathers were, — very frugal, — though, for the most part, they deal generously by their minister, and provide well for the schools and the poor. If, at any time, in common with most of our towns, they have carried this economy to the verge of a vice, it is to be remembered that a town is, in many respects, a financial corporation. They economize, that they may sacrifice. They stint and higgle on the price of a pew, that they may send 200 soldiers to General Washington to keep Great Britain at bay. For splendor, there must somewhere be rigid economy. That the head of the house may go brave, the members must be plainly clad, and the town must save that the State may spend. Of late years, the growth of Concord has been slow. Without navigable waters, without mineral riches, without any considerable mill privileges, the natural in-

crease of her population is drained by the constant emigration of the youth. Her sons have settled the region around us, and far from us. Their wagons have rattled down the remote western hills. And in every part of this country, and in many foreign parts, they plough the earth, they traverse the sea, they engage in trade and in all the professions.'

Fellow citizens; let not the solemn shadows of two hundred years, this day, fall over us in vain. I feel some unwillingness to quit the remembrance of the past. With all the hope of the new I feel that we are leaving the old. Every moment carries us farther from the two great epochs of public principle, the Planting, and the Revolution of the colony. Fortunate and favored this town has been, in having received so large an infusion of the spirit of both of those periods. Humble as is our village in the circle of later and prouder towns that whiten the land, it has been consecrated by the presence and activity of the purest men. Why need I remind you of our own Hosmers, Minotts, Cumings, Barretts, Beattons, the departed benefactors of the town? On the village green have been the steps of Winthrop and Dudley; of John Eliot, the Indian apostle, who had a courage that in-

timidated those savages whom his love could not melt; of Whitfield, whose silver voice melted his great congregation into tears; of Hancock, and his compatriots of the Provincial Congress; of Langdon, and the college over which he presided. But even more sacred influences than these have mingled here with the stream of human life. The merit of those who fill a space in the world's history, who are borne forward, as it were, by the weight of thousands whom they lead, sheds a perfume less sweet than do the sacrifices of private virtue. I have had much opportunity of access to anecdotes of families, and I believe this town to have been the dwelling-place, in all times since its planting, of pious and excellent persons, who walked meekly through the paths of common life, who served God, and loved man, and never let go the hope of immortality. The benediction of their prayers and of their principles lingers around us. The acknowledgment of the Supreme Being exalts the history of this people. It brought the fathers hither. In a war of principle, it delivered their sons. And so long as a spark of this faith survives among the children's children so long shall the name of Concord be honest and venerable.

III

LETTER

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

A PROTEST AGAINST THE REMOVAL OF THE CHEROKEE INDIANS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

"Say, what is Honour? 'T is the finest sense
Of justice which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence,
Suffered or done."

WORDSWORTH.

LETTER

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

CONCORD, MASS., April 23, 1838.

SIR: The seat you fill places you in a relation of credit and nearness to every citizen. By right and natural position, every citizen is your friend. Before any acts contrary to his own judgment or interest have repelled the affections of any man, each may look with trust and living anticipation to your government. Each has the highest right to call your attention to such subjects as are of a public nature, and properly belong to the chief magistrate; and the good magistrate will feel a joy in meeting such confidence. In this belief and at the instance of a few of my friends and neighbors, I crave of your patience a short hearing for their sentiments and my own: and the circumstance that my name will be utterly unknown to you will only give the fairer chance to your equitable construction of what I have to say.

Sir, my communication respects the sinister rumors that fill this part of the country concerning the Cherokee people. The interest

always felt in the aboriginal population — an interest naturally growing as that decays — has been heightened in regard to this tribe. Even in our distant State some good rumor of their worth and civility has arrived. We have learned with joy their improvement in the social arts. We have read their newspapers. We have seen some of them in our schools and colleges. In common with the great body of the American people, we have witnessed with sympathy the painful labors of these red men to redeem their own race from the doom of eternal inferiority, and to borrow and domesticate in the tribe the arts and customs of the Caucasian race. And notwithstanding the unaccountable apathy with which of late years the Indians have been sometimes abandoned to their enemies, it is not to be doubted that it is the good pleasure and the understanding of all humane persons in the Republic, of the men and the matrons sitting in the thriving independent families all over the land, that they shall be duly cared for; that they shall taste justice and love from all to whom we have delegated the office of dealing with them.

The newspapers now inform us that, in December, 1835, a treaty contracting for the

exchange of all the Cherokee territory was pretended to be made by an agent on the part of the United States with some persons appearing on the part of the Cherokees; that the fact afterwards transpired that these deputies did by no means represent the will of the nation; and that, out of eighteen thousand souls composing the nation, fifteen thousand six hundred and sixty-eight have protested against the so-called treaty. It now appears that the government of the United States choose to hold the Cherokees to this sham treaty, and are proceeding to execute the same. Almost the entire Cherokee Nation stand up and say, "This is not our act. Behold us. Here are we. Do not mistake that handful of deserters for us;" and the American President and the Cabinet, the Senate and the House of Representatives, neither hear these men nor see them, and are contracting to put this active nation into carts and boats, and to drag them over mountains and rivers to a wilderness at a vast distance beyond the Mississippi. And a paper purporting to be an army order fixes a month from this day as the hour for this doleful removal.

In the name of God, sir, we ask you if this be so. Do the newspapers rightly inform us?

Men and women with pale and perplexed faces meet one another in the streets and churches here, and ask if this be so. We have inquired if this be a gross misrepresentation from the party opposed to the government and anxious to blacken it with the people. We have looked in the newspapers of different parties and find a horrid confirmation of the tale. We are slow to believe it. We hoped the Indians were misinformed, and that their remonstrance was premature, and will turn out to be a needless act of terror.

The piety, the principle that is left in the United States, if only in its coarsest form, a regard to the speech of men, — forbid us to entertain it as a fact. Such a dereliction of all faith and virtue, such a denial of justice, and such deafness to screams for mercy were never heard of in times of peace and in the dealing of a nation with its own allies and wards, since the earth was made. Sir, does this government think that the people of the United States are become savage and mad? From their mind are the sentiments of love and a good nature wiped clean out? The soul of man, the justice, the mercy that is the heart's heart in all men, from Maine to Georgia, does abhor this business.

In speaking thus the sentiments of my neighbors and my own, perhaps I overstep the bounds of decorum. But would it not be a higher indecorum coldly to argue a matter like this? We only state the fact that a crime is projected that confounds our understandings by its magnitude, — a crime that really deprives us as well as the Cherokees of a country? for how could we call the conspiracy that should crush these poor Indians our government, or the land that was cursed by their parting and dying imprecations our country, any more? You, sir, will bring down that renowned chair in which you sit into infamy if your seal is set to this instrument of perfidy; and the name of this nation, hitherto the sweet omen of religion and liberty, will stink to the world.

You will not do us the injustice of connecting this remonstrance with any sectional and party feeling. It is in our hearts the simplest commandment of brotherly love. We will not have this great and solemn claim upon national and human justice huddled aside under the flimsy plea of its being a party act. Sir, to us the questions upon which the government and the people have been agitated during the past year, touching the prostration of the currency and of

trade, seem but motes in comparison. These hard times, it is true, have brought the discussion home to every farmhouse and poor man's house in this town; but it is the chirping of grasshoppers beside the immortal question whether justice shall be done by the race of civilized to the race of savage man, — whether all the attributes of reason, of civility, of justice, and even of mercy, shall be put off by the American people, and so vast an outrage upon the Cherokee Nation and upon human nature shall be consummated.

One circumstance lessens the reluctance with which I intrude at this time on your attention my conviction that the government ought to be admonished of a new historical fact, which the discussion of this question has disclosed, namely, that there exists in a great part of the Northern people a gloomy diffidence in the *moral* character of the government.

On the broaching of this question, a general expression of despondency, of disbelief that any good will accrue from a remonstrance on an act of fraud and robbery, appeared in those men to whom we naturally turn for aid and counsel. Will the American government steal? Will it lie? Will it kill? — We ask triumphantly. Our

counsellors and old statesmen here say that ten years ago they would have staked their lives on the affirmation that the proposed Indian measures could not be executed ; that the unanimous country would put them down. And now the steps of this crime follow each other so fast, at such fatally quick time, that the millions of virtuous citizens, whose agents the government are, have no place to interpose, and must shut their eyes until the last howl and wailing of these tormented villages and tribes shall afflict the ear of the world.

I will not hide from you, as an indication of the alarming distrust, that a letter addressed as mine is, and suggesting to the mind of the Executive the plain obligations of man, has a burlesque character in the apprehensions of some of my friends. I, sir, will not beforehand treat you with the contumely of this distrust. I will at least state to you this fact, and show you how plain and humane people, whose love would be honor, regard the policy of the government, and what injurious inferences they draw as to the minds of the governors. A man with your experience in affairs must have seen cause to appreciate the futility of opposition to the moral sentiment. However feeble the sufferer and

however great the oppressor, it is in the nature of things that the blow should recoil upon the aggressor. For God is in the sentiment, and it cannot be withstood. The potentate and the people perish before it; but with it, and as its executor, they are omnipotent.

I write thus, sir, to inform you of the state of mind these Indian tidings have awakened here, and to pray with one voice more that you, whose hands are strong with the delegated power of fifteen millions of men, will avert with that might the terrific injury which threatens the Cherokee tribe.

With great respect, sir, I am your fellow citizen,

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

IV

ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN CONCORD ON THE ANNIVERSARY
OF THE EMANCIPATION OF THE NEGROES
IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES,
AUGUST 1, 1844.

There a captive sat in chains,
Crooning ditties treasured well
From his Afric's torrid plains.
Sole estate his sire bequeathed, —
Hapless sire to hapless son, —
Was the wailing song he breathed,
And his chain when life was done.

ADDRESS

EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS: We are met to exchange congratulations on the anniversary of an event singular in the history of civilization; a day of reason; of the clear light; of that which makes us better than a flock of birds and beasts; a day which gave the immense fortification of a fact, of gross history, to ethical abstractions. It was the settlement, as far as a great Empire was concerned, of a question on which almost every leading citizen in it had taken care to record his vote; one which for many years absorbed the attention of the best and most eminent of mankind. I might well hesitate, coming from other studies, and without the smallest claim to be a special laborer in this work of humanity, to undertake to set this matter before you; which ought rather to be done by a strict coöperation of many well-advised persons; but I shall not apologize for my weakness. In this cause, no man's weakness is any prejudice: it has a thousand sons; if one

man cannot speak, ten others can; and, whether by the wisdom of its friends, or by the folly of the adversaries; by speech and by silence; by doing and by omitting to do, it goes forward. Therefore I will speak, — or, not I, but the might of liberty in my weakness. The subject is said to have the property of making dull men eloquent.

It has been in all men's experience a marked effect of the enterprise in behalf of the African, to generate an overbearing and defying spirit. The institution of slavery seems to its opponent to have but one side, and he feels that none but a stupid or a malignant person can hesitate on a view of the facts. Under such an impulse, I was about to say, If any cannot speak, or cannot hear the words of freedom, let him go hence, — I had almost said, Creep into your grave, the universe has no need of you! But I have thought better: let him not go. When we consider what remains to be done for this interest in this country, the dictates of humanity make us tender of such as are not yet persuaded.[1] The hardest selfishness is to be borne with. Let us withhold every reproachful, and, if we can, every indignant remark. In this cause, we must renounce our temper, and the risings of pride. If there be any

man who thinks the ruin of a race of men a small matter, compared with the last decoration and completions of his own comfort, — who would not so much as part with his ice-cream, to save them from rapine and manacles, I think I must not hesitate to satisfy that man that also his cream and vanilla are safer and cheaper by placing the negro nation on a fair footing than by robbing them. If the Virginian piques himself on the picturesque luxury of his vassalage, on the heavy Ethiopian manners of his house-servants, their silent obedience, their hue of bronze, their turbaned heads, and would not exchange them for the more intelligent but precarious hired service of whites, I shall not refuse to show him that when their free-papers are made out, it will still be their interest to remain on his estate, and that the oldest planters of Jamaica are convinced that it is cheaper to pay wages than to own the slave.

The history of mankind interests us only as it exhibits a steady gain of truth and right, in the incessant conflict which it records between the material and the moral nature. From the earliest monuments it appears that one race was victim and served the other races. In the oldest temples of Egypt, negro captives are painted on the

tombs of kings, in such attitudes as to show that they are on the point of being executed; and Herodotus, our oldest historian, relates that the Troglodytes hunted the Ethiopians in four-horse chariots. From the earliest time, the negro has been an article of luxury to the commercial nations. So has it been, down to the day that has just dawned on the world. Language must be raked, the secrets of slaughter-houses and infamous holes that cannot front the day, must be ransacked, to tell what negro slavery has been. These men, our benefactors, as they are producers of corn and wine, of coffee, of tobacco, of cotton, of sugar, of rum and brandy; gentle and joyous themselves, and producers of comfort and luxury for the civilized world, — there seated in the finest climates of the globe, children of the sun, — I am heart-sick when I read how they came there, and how they are kept there. Their case was left out of the mind and out of the heart of their brothers. The prizes of society, the trumpet of fame, the privileges of learning, of culture, of religion, the decencies and joys of marriage, honor, obedience, personal authority and a perpetual melioration into a finer civility, — these were for all, but not for them. For the negro, was the slave-ship to begin with, in whose

filthy hold he sat in irons, unable to lie down; bad food, and insufficiency of that; disfranchisement; no property in the rags that covered him; no marriage, no right in the poor black woman that cherished him in her bosom, no right to the children of his body; no security from the humors, none from the crimes, none from the appetites of his master: toil, famine, insult and flogging; and, when he sank in the furrow, no wind of good fame blew over him, no priest of salvation visited him with glad tidings: but he went down to death with dusky dreams of African shadow-catchers and Obeahs hunting him.[1] Very sad was the negro tradition, that the Great Spirit, in the beginning offered the black man, whom he loved better than the buckra, or white, his choice of two boxes, a big and a little one. The black man was greedy, and chose the largest. "The buckra box was full up with pen, paper and whip, and the negro box with hoe and bill; and hoe and bill for negro to this day."

But the crude element of good in human affairs must work and ripen, spite of whips and plantation laws and West Indian interest. Conscience rolled on its pillow, and could not sleep. We sympathize very tenderly here with the poor

aggrieved planter, of whom so many unpleasant things are said; but if we saw the whip applied to old men, to tender women; and, undeniably, though I shrink to say so, pregnant women set in the treadmill for refusing to work; when, not they, but the eternal law of animal nature refused to work; — if we saw men's backs flayed with cowhides, and "hot rum poured on, superinduced with brine or pickle, rubbed in with a cornhusk, in the scorching heat of the sun;" — if we saw the runaways hunted with bloodhounds into swamps and hills; and, in cases of passion, a planter throwing his negro into a copper of boiling cane-juice, — if we saw these things with eyes, we too should wince. They are not pleasant sights. The blood is moral: the blood is anti-slavery: it runs cold in the veins: the stomach rises with disgust, and curses slavery. Well, so it happened; a good man or woman, a country boy or girl, — it would so fall out, — once in a while saw these injuries and had the indiscretion to tell of them. The horrid story ran and flew; the winds blew it all over the world. They who heard it asked their rich and great friends if it was true, or only missionary lies. The richest and greatest, the prime minister of England, the king's privy council were obliged

to say that it was too true. It became plain to all men, the more this business was looked into, that the crimes and cruelties of the slave-traders and slave-owners could not be overstated. The more it was searched, the more shocking anecdotes came up, — things not to be spoken. Humane persons who were informed of the reports insisted on proving them. Granville Sharpe was accidentally made acquainted with the sufferings of a slave, whom a West Indian planter had brought with him to London and had beaten with a pistol on his head, so badly that his whole body became diseased, and the man useless to his master, who left him to go whither he pleased. The man applied to Mr. William Sharpe, a charitable surgeon, who attended the diseases of the poor. In process of time, he was healed. Granville Sharpe found him at his brother's and procured a place for him in an apothecary's shop. The master accidentally met his recovered slave, and instantly endeavored to get possession of him again. Sharpe protected the slave. In consulting with the lawyers, they told Sharpe the laws were against him. Sharpe would not believe it; no prescription on earth could ever render such iniquities legal. 'But the decisions are against you, and Lord Mansfield, now Chief

Justice of England, leans to the decisions.' Sharpe instantly sat down and gave himself to the study of English law for more than two years, until he had proved that the opinions relied on, of Talbot and Yorke, were incompatible with the former English decisions and with the whole spirit of English law. He published his book in 1769, and he so filled the heads and hearts of his advocates that when he brought the case of George Somerset, another slave, before Lord Mansfield, the slavish decisions were set aside, and equity affirmed.[1] There is a sparkle of God's righteousness in Lord Mansfield's judgment, which does the heart good. Very unwilling had that great lawyer been to reverse the late decisions; he suggested twice from the bench, in the course of the trial, how the question might be got rid of: but the hint was not taken; the case was adjourned again and again, and judgment delayed. At last judgment was demanded, and on the 22d June, 1772, Lord Mansfield is reported to have decided in these words:

"Immemorial usage preserves the memory of *positive law*, long after all traces of the occasion, reason, authority and time of its introduction, are lost; and in a case so odious as the condition

of slaves, must be taken strictly (tracing the subject to *natural principles*, the claim of slavery never can be supported). The power claimed by this return never was in use here. We cannot say the cause set forth by this return is allowed or approved of by the laws of this kingdom; and therefore the man must be discharged."

This decision established the principle that the "air of England is too pure for any slave to breathe," but the wrongs in the islands were not thereby touched. Public attention, however, was drawn that way, and the methods of the stealing and the transportation from Africa became noised abroad. The Quakers got the story. In their plain meeting-houses and prim dwellings this dismal agitation got entrance. They were rich: they owned, for debt or by inheritance, island property; they were religious, tender-hearted men and women; and they had to hear the news and digest it as they could. Six Quakers met in London on the 6th of July, 1783, — William Dillwyn, Samuel Hoar, George Harrison, Thomas Knowles, John Lloyd, Joseph Woods, "to consider what step they should take for the relief and liberation of the negro slaves in the West Indies, and for the discouragement of the slave-trade on the coast of Africa." They made

friends and raised money for the slave; they interested their Yearly Meeting; and all English and all American Quakers. John Woolman of New Jersey, whilst yet an apprentice, was uneasy in his mind when he was set to write a bill of sale of a negro, for his master. He gave his testimony against the traffic, in Maryland and Virginia. Thomas Clarkson was a youth at Cambridge, England, when the subject given out for a Latin prize dissertation was, "Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?" He wrote an essay, and won the prize; but he wrote too well for his own peace; he began to ask himself if these things could be true; and if they were, he could no longer rest. He left Cambridge; he fell in with the six Quakers. They engaged him to act for them. He himself interested Mr. Wilberforce in the matter. The shipmasters in that trade were the greatest miscreants, and guilty of every barbarity to their own crews. Clarkson went to Bristol, made himself acquainted with the interior of the slave-ships and the details of the trade. The facts confirmed his sentiment, "that Providence had never made that to be wise which was immoral, and that the slave-trade was as impolitic as it was unjust;" that it was found peculiarly fatal to those

employed in it. More seamen died in that trade in one year than in the whole remaining trade of the country in two. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox were drawn into the generous enterprise. In 1788, the House of Commons voted Parliamentary inquiry. In 1791, a bill to abolish the trade was brought in by Wilberforce, and supported by him and by Fox and Burke and Pitt, with the utmost ability and faithfulness; resisted by the planters and the whole West Indian interest, and lost. During the next sixteen years, ten times, year after year, the attempt was renewed by Mr. Wilberforce, and ten times defeated by the planters. The king, and all the royal family but one, were against it. These debates are instructive, as they show on what grounds the trade was assailed and defended. Everything generous, wise and sprightly is sure to come to the attack. On the other part are found cold prudence, barefaced selfishness and silent votes. But the nation was aroused to enthusiasm. Every horrid fact became known. In 1791, three hundred thousand persons in Britain pledged themselves to abstain from all articles of island produce. The planters were obliged to give way; and in 1807, on the 25th March, the bill passed, and the slave-trade was abolished.

The assailants of slavery had early agreed to limit their political action on this subject to the abolition of the trade, but Granville Sharpe, as a matter of conscience, whilst he acted as chairman of the London Committee, felt constrained to record his protest against the limitation, declaring that slavery was as much a crime against the Divine law as the slave-trade. The trade, under false flags, went on as before. In 1821, according to official documents presented to the American government by the Colonization Society, 200,000 slaves were deported from Africa. Nearly 30,000 were landed in the port of Havana alone. In consequence of the dangers of the trade growing out of the act of abolition, ships were built sharp for swiftness, and with a frightful disregard of the comfort of the victims they were destined to transport. They carried five, six, even seven hundred stowed in a ship built so narrow as to be unsafe, being made just broad enough on the beam to keep the sea. In attempting to make its escape from the pursuit of a man-of-war, one ship flung five hundred slaves alive into the sea. These facts went into Parliament. In the islands was an ominous state of cruel and licentious society; every house had a dungeon attached to it; every slave was worked

by the whip. There is no end to the tragic anecdotes in the municipal records of the colonies. The boy was set to strip and flog his own mother to blood, for a small offence. Looking in the face of his master by the negro was held to be violence by the island courts. He was worked sixteen hours, and his ration by law, in some islands, was a pint of flour and one salt herring a day. He suffered insult, stripes, mutilation at the humor of the master: iron collars were riveted on their necks with iron prongs ten inches long; capsicum pepper was rubbed in the eyes of the females; and they were done to death with the most shocking levity between the master and manager, without fine or inquiry. And when, at last, some Quakers, Moravians, and Wesleyan and Baptist missionaries, following in the steps of Carey and Ward in the East Indies, had been moved to come and cheer the poor victim with the hope of some reparation, in a future world, of the wrongs he suffered in this, these missionaries were persecuted by the planters, their lives threatened, their chapels burned, and the negroes furiously forbidden to go near them. These outrages rekindled the flame of British indignation. Petitions poured into Parliament: a million persons signed their

names to these; and in 1833, on the 14th May, Lord Stanley, Minister of the Colonies, introduced into the House of Commons his bill for the Emancipation.

The scheme of the Minister, with such modification as it received in the legislature, proposed gradual emancipation; that on 1st August, 1834, all persons now slaves should be entitled to be registered as apprenticed laborers, and to acquire thereby all the rights and privileges of freemen, subject to the restriction of laboring under certain conditions. These conditions were, that the prædials should owe three fourths of the profits of their labor to their masters for six years, and the non-prædials for four years.[1] The other fourth of the apprentice's time was to be his own, which he might sell to his master, or to other persons; and at the end of the term of years fixed, he should be free.

With these provisions and conditions, the bill proceeds, in the twelfth section, in the following terms: "Be it enacted, that all and every person who, on the first August, 1834, shall be holden in slavery within any such British colony as aforesaid, shall upon and from and after the said first August, become and be to all intents and purposes free, and discharged of and from

all manner of slavery, and shall be absolutely and forever manumitted; and that the children thereafter born to any such persons, and the offspring of such children, shall, in like manner, be free, from their birth; and that from and after the first August, 1834, slavery shall be and is hereby utterly and forever abolished and declared unlawful throughout the British colonies, plantations, and possessions abroad."

The Ministers, having estimated the slave products of the colonies in annual exports of sugar, rum and coffee, at £1,500,000 per annum, estimated the total value of the slave property at 30,000,000 pounds sterling, and proposed to give the planters, as a compensation for so much of the slaves' time as the act took from them, 20,000,000 pounds sterling, to be divided into nineteen shares for the nineteen colonies, and to be distributed to the owners of slaves by commissioners, whose appointment and duties were regulated by the Act. After much debate, the bill passed by large majorities. The apprenticeship system is understood to have proceeded from Lord Brougham, and was by him urged on his colleagues, who, it is said, were inclined to the policy of immediate emancipation.

The colonial legislatures received the act of

Parliament with various degrees of displeasure, and, of course, every provision of the bill was criticised with severity. The new relation between the master and the apprentice, it was feared, would be mischievous; for the bill required the appointment of magistrates who should hear every complaint of the apprentice and see that justice was done him. It was feared that the interest of the master and servant would now produce perpetual discord between them. In the island of Antigua, containing 37,000 people, 30,000 being negroes, these objections had such weight that the legislature rejected the apprenticeship system, and adopted absolute emancipation. In the other islands the system of the Ministry was accepted.

The reception of it by the negro population was equal in nobleness to the deed. The negroes were called together by the missionaries and by the planters, and the news explained to them. On the night of the 31st July, they met everywhere at their churches and chapels, and at midnight, when the clock struck twelve, on their knees, the silent, weeping assembly became men; they rose and embraced each other; they cried, they sung, they prayed, they were wild with joy, but there was no riot, no feasting. I

have never read anything in history more touching than the moderation of the negroes. Some American captains left the shore and put to sea, anticipating insurrection and general murder. With far different thoughts, the negroes spent the hour in their huts and chapels. I will not repeat to you the well-known paragraph, in which Messrs. Thome and Kimball, the commissioners sent out in the year 1837 by the American Anti-Slavery Society, describe the occurrences of that night in the island of Antigua. It has been quoted in every newspaper, and Dr. Channing has given it additional fame. But I must be indulged in quoting a few sentences from the pages that follow it, narrating the behavior of the emancipated people on the next day.'

"The first of August came on Friday, and a release was proclaimed from all work until the next Monday. The day was chiefly spent by the great mass of the negroes in the churches and chapels. The clergy and missionaries throughout the island were actively engaged, seizing the opportunity to enlighten the people on all the duties and responsibilities of their new relation, and urging them to the attainment of that higher liberty with which Christ maketh his children

free. In every quarter, we were assured, the day was like a Sabbath. Work had ceased. The hum of business was still: tranquillity pervaded the towns and country. The planters informed us that they went to the chapels where their own people were assembled, greeted them, shook hands with them, and exchanged the most hearty good wishes. At Grace Hill, there were at least a thousand persons around the Moravian Chapel who could not get in. For once the house of God suffered violence, and the violent took it by force. At Grace Bay, the people, all dressed in white, formed a procession, and walked arm in arm into the chapel. We were told that the dress of the negroes on that occasion was uncommonly simple and modest. There was not the least disposition to gayety. Throughout the island, there was not a single dance known of, either day or night, nor so much as a fiddle played."

On the next Monday morning, with very few exceptions, every negro on every plantation was in the field at his work. In some places, they waited to see their master, to know what bargain he would make; but for the most part, throughout the islands, nothing painful occurred. In June, 1835, the Ministers, Lord Aberdeen and

Sir George Grey, declared to the Parliament that the system worked well; that now for ten months, from 1st August, 1834, no injury or violence had been offered to any white, and only one black had been hurt in 800,000 negroes: and, contrary to many sinister predictions, that the new crop of island produce would not fall short of that of the last year.

But the habit of oppression was not destroyed by a law and a day of jubilee. It soon appeared in all the islands that the planters were disposed to use their old privileges, and overwork the apprentices; to take from them, under various pretences, their fourth part of their time; and to exert the same licentious despotism as before. The negroes complained to the magistrates and to the governor. In the island of Jamaica, this ill blood continually grew worse. The governors, Lord Belmore, the Earl of Sligo, and afterwards Sir Lionel Smith (a governor of their own class, who had been sent out to gratify the planters), threw themselves on the side of the oppressed, and were at constant quarrel with the angry and bilious island legislature. Nothing can exceed the ill humor and sulkiness of the addresses of this assembly.

I may here express a general remark, which

the history of slavery seems to justify, that it is not founded solely on the avarice of the planter. We sometimes say, the planter does not want slaves, he only wants the immunities and the luxuries which the slaves yield him; give him money, give him a machine that will yield him as much money as the slaves, and he will thankfully let them go. He has no love of slavery, he wants luxury, and he will pay even this price of crime and danger for it. But I think experience does not warrant this favorable distinction, but shows the existence, beside the covetousness, of a bitterer element, the love of power, the voluptuousness of holding a human being in his absolute control. We sometimes observe that spoiled children contract a habit of annoying quite wantonly those who have charge of them, and seem to measure their own sense of well-being, not by what they do, but by the degree of reaction they can cause. It is vain to get rid of them by not minding them: if purring and humming is not noticed, they squeal and screech; then if you chide and console them, they find the experiment succeeds, and they begin again. The child will sit in your arms contented, provided you do nothing. If you take a book and read, he commences hostile operations. The

planter is the spoiled child of his unnatural habits, and has contracted in his indolent and luxurious climate the need of excitement by irritating and tormenting his slave.

Sir Lionel Smith defended the poor negro girls, prey to the licentiousness of the planters; they shall not be whipped with tamarind rods if they do not comply with their master's will; he defended the negro women; they should not be made to dig the cane-holes (which is the very hardest of the field work); he defended the Baptist preachers and the stipendiary magistrates, who are the negroes' friends, from the power of the planter. The power of the planters, however, to oppress, was greater than the power of the apprentice and of his guardians to withstand. Lord Brougham and Mr. Buxton declared that the planter had not fulfilled his part in the contract, whilst the apprentices had fulfilled theirs; and demanded that the emancipation should be hastened, and the apprenticeship abolished. Parliament was compelled to pass additional laws for the defence and security of the negro, and in ill humor at these acts, the great island of Jamaica, with a population of half a million, and 300,000 negroes, early in 1838, resolved to throw up the two remaining years of

apprenticeship, and to emancipate absolutely on the 1st August, 1838. In British Guiana, in Dominica, the same resolution had been earlier taken with more good will; and the other islands fell into the measure; so that on the 1st August, 1838, the shackles dropped from every British slave. The accounts which we have from all parties, both from the planters (and those too who were originally most opposed to the measure), and from the new freemen, are of the most satisfactory kind. The manner in which the new festival was celebrated, brings tears to the eyes. The First of August, 1838, was observed in Jamaica as a day of thanksgiving and prayer. Sir Lionel Smith, the governor, writes to the British Ministry, "It is impossible for me to do justice to the good order, decorum and gratitude which the whole laboring population manifested on that happy occasion. Though joy beamed on every countenance, it was throughout tempered with solemn thankfulness to God, and the churches and chapels were everywhere filled with these happy people in humble offering of praise."

The Queen, in her speech to the Lords and Commons, praised the conduct of the emancipated population:[1] and in 1840 Sir Charles

Metcalfe, the new governor of Jamaica, in his address to the Assembly expressed himself to that late exasperated body in these terms: "All those who are acquainted with the state of the island know that our emancipated population are as free, as independent in their conduct, as well conditioned, as much in the enjoyment of abundance, and as strongly sensible of the blessings of liberty, as any that we know of in any country. All disqualifications and distinctions of color have ceased; men of all colors have equal rights in law, and an equal footing in society, and every man's position is settled by the same circumstances which regulate that point in other free countries, where no difference of color exists. It may be asserted, without fear of denial, that the former slaves of Jamaica are now as secure in all social rights, as freeborn Britons." He further describes the erection of numerous churches, chapels and schools which the new population required, and adds that more are still demanded. The legislature, in their reply, echo the governor's statement, and say, "The peaceful demeanor of the emancipated population redounds to their own credit, and affords a proof of their continued comfort and prosperity."

I said, this event is signal in the history of civilization. There are many styles of civilization, and not one only. Ours is full of barbarities. There are many faculties in man, each of which takes its turn of activity, and that faculty which is paramount in any period and exerts itself through the strongest nation, determines the civility of that age: and each age thinks its own the perfection of reason. Our culture is very cheap and intelligible. Unroof any house, and you shall find it. The well-being consists in having a sufficiency of coffee and toast, with a daily newspaper; a well glazed parlor, with marbles, mirrors and centre-table; and the excitement of a few parties and a few rides in a year. Such as one house, such are all. The owner of a New York manor imitates the mansion and equipage of the London nobleman; the Boston merchant rivals his brother of New York; and the villages copy Boston. There have been nations elevated by great sentiments. Such was the civility of Sparta and the Dorian race, whilst it was defective in some of the chief elements of ours. That of Athens, again, lay in an intellect dedicated to beauty. That of Asia Minor in poetry, music and arts; that of Palestine in piety; that of Rome in military

arts and virtues, exalted by a prodigious magnanimity; that of China and Japan in the last exaggeration of decorum and etiquette. Our civility, England determines the style of, inasmuch as England is the strongest of the family of existing nations, and as we are the expansion of that people. It is that of a trading nation; it is a shopkeeping civility. The English lord is a retired shopkeeper, and has the prejudices and timidities of that profession. And we are shopkeepers, and have acquired the vices and virtues that belong to trade. We peddle, we truck, we sail, we row, we ride in cars, we creep in teams, we go in canals, — to market, and for the sale of goods. The national aim and employment streams into our ways of thinking, our laws, our habits and our manners. The customer is the immediate jewel of our souls. Him we flatter, him we feast, compliment, vote for, and will not contradict. It was, or it seemed the dictate of trade, to keep the negro down. We had found a race who were less warlike, and less energetic shopkeepers than we; who had very little skill in trade. We found it very convenient to keep them at work, since, by the aid of a little whipping, we could get their work for nothing but their board and the cost of

whips. What if it cost a few unpleasant scenes on the coast of Africa? That was a great way off; and the scenes could be endured by some sturdy, unscrupulous fellows, who could go, for high wages, and bring us the men, and need not trouble our ears with the disagreeable particulars. If any mention was made of homicide, madness, adultery, and intolerable tortures, we would let the church-bells ring louder, the church-organ swell its peal and drown the hideous sound. The sugar they raised was excellent: nobody tasted blood in it. The coffee was fragrant; the tobacco was incense; the brandy made nations happy; the cotton clothed the world. What! all raised by these men, and no wages? Excellent! What a convenience! They seemed created by Providence to bear the heat and the whipping, and make these fine articles.

But unhappily, most unhappily, gentlemen, man is born with intellect, as well as with a love of sugar; and with a sense of justice, as well as a taste for strong drink. These ripened, as well as those. You could not educate him, you could not get any poetry, any wisdom, any beauty in woman, any strong and commanding character in man, but these absurdities would still come flashing out, — these absurdities of a demand

for justice, a generosity for the weak and oppressed. Unhappily, too, for the planter, the laws of nature are in harmony with each other: that which the head and the heart demand is found to be, in the long run, for what the grossest calculator calls his advantage. The moral sense is always supported by the permanent interest of the parties. Else, I know not how, in our world, any good would ever get done.[1] It was shown to the planters that they, as well as the negroes, were slaves; that though they paid no wages, they got very poor work; that their estates were ruining them, under the finest climate; and that they needed the severest monopoly laws at home to keep them from bankruptcy. The oppression of the slave recoiled on them. They were full of vices; their children were lumps of pride, sloth, sensuality and rottenness. The position of woman was nearly as bad as it could be; and, like other robbers, they could not sleep in security. Many planters have said, since the emancipation, that, before that day, they were the greatest slaves on the estates. Slavery is no scholar, no improver; it does not love the whistle of the railroad; it does not love the newspaper, the mail-bag, a college, a book or a preacher who has the absurd

whim of saying what he thinks; it does not increase the white population; it does not improve the soil; everything goes to decay. For these reasons the islands proved bad customers to England. It was very easy for manufacturers less shrewd than those of Birmingham and Manchester to see that if the state of things in the islands was altered, if the slaves had wages, the slaves would be clothed, would build houses, would fill them with tools, with pottery, with crockery, with hardware; and negro women love fine clothes as well as white women. In every naked negro of those thousands, they saw a future customer. Meantime, they saw further that the slave-trade, by keeping in barbarism the whole coast of eastern Africa, deprives them of countries and nations of customers, if once freedom and civility and European manners could get a foothold there. But the trade could not be abolished whilst this hungry West Indian market, with an appetite like the grave, cried, 'More, more, bring me a hundred a day;' they could not expect any mitigation in the madness of the poor African war-chiefs. These considerations opened the eyes of the dullest in Britain. More than this, the West Indian estate was owned or mortgaged in England, and the owner and the

mortgagee had very plain intimations that the feeling of English liberty was gaining every hour new mass and velocity, and the hostility to such as resisted it would be fatal. The House of Commons would destroy the protection of island produce, and interfere in English politics in the island legislation: so they hastened to make the best of their position, and accepted the bill.

These considerations, I doubt not, had their weight; the interest of trade, the interest of the revenue, and, moreover, the good fame of the action. It was inevitable that men should feel these motives. But they do not appear to have had an excessive or unreasonable weight. On reviewing this history, I think the whole transaction reflects infinite honor on the people and parliament of England. It was a stately spectacle, to see the cause of human rights argued with so much patience and generosity and with such a mass of evidence before that powerful people. It is a creditable incident in the history that when, in 1789, the first privy council report of evidence on the trade (a bulky folio embodying all the facts which the London Committee had been engaged for years in collecting, and all the examinations before the council) was presented to the House of Commons, a late day

being named for the discussion, in order to give members time, — Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Pitt, the Prime Minister, and other gentlemen, took advantage of the postponement to retire into the country to read the report. For months and years the bill was debated, with some consciousness of the extent of its relations, by the first citizens of England, the foremost men of the earth; every argument was weighed, every particle of evidence was sifted and laid in the scale; and, at last, the right triumphed, the poor man was vindicated, and the oppressor was flung out. I know that England has the advantage of trying the question at a wide distance from the spot where the nuisance exists; the planters are not, excepting in rare examples, members of the legislature. The extent of the empire, and the magnitude and number of other questions crowding into court, keep this one in balance, and prevent it from obtaining that ascendency, and being urged with that intemperance which a question of property tends to acquire. There are causes in the composition of the British legislature, and the relation of its leaders to the country and to Europe, which exclude much that is pitiful and injurious in other legislative assemblies. From these reasons, the question was discussed with

a rare independence and magnanimity. It was not narrowed down to a paltry electioneering trap; and, I must say, a delight in justice, an honest tenderness for the poor negro, for man suffering these wrongs, combined with the national pride, which refused to give the support of English soil or the protection of the English flag to these disgusting violations of nature.

Forgive me, fellow citizens, if I own to you, that in the last few days that my attention has been occupied with this history, I have not been able to read a page of it without the most painful comparisons. Whilst I have read of England, I have thought of New England. Whilst I have meditated in my solitary walks on the magnanimity of the English Bench and Senate, reaching out the benefit of the law to the most helpless citizen in her world-wide realm, I have found myself oppressed by other thoughts. As I have walked in the pastures and along the edge of woods, I could not keep my imagination on those agreeable figures, for other images that intruded on me. I could not see the great vision of the patriots and senators who have adopted the slave's cause: — they turned their backs on me. No: I see other pictures, — of mean men; I see very poor, very ill-clothed,

very ignorant men, not surrounded by happy friends, — to be plain, — poor black men of obscure employment as mariners, cooks or stewards, in ships, yet citizens of this our Commonwealth of Massachusetts, — freeborn as we, — whom the slave-laws of the States of South Carolina, Georgia and Louisiana have arrested in the vessels in which they visited those ports, and shut up in jails so long as the vessel remained in port, with the stringent addition, that if the shipmaster fails to pay the costs of this official arrest and the board in jail, these citizens are to be sold for slaves, to pay that expense. This man, these men, I see, and no law to save them. Fellow citizens, this crime will not be hushed up any longer. I have learned that a citizen of Nantucket, walking in New Orleans, found a freeborn citizen of Nantucket, a man, too, of great personal worth, and, as it happened, very dear to him, as having saved his own life, working chained in the streets of that city, kidnapped by such a process as this. In the sleep of the laws, the private interference of two excellent citizens of Boston has, I have ascertained, rescued several natives of this State from these Southern prisons. Gentlemen, I thought the deck of a Massachusetts ship was as much the

territory of Massachusetts as the floor on which we stand. It should be as sacred as the temple of God. The poorest fishing-smack that floats under the shadow of an iceberg in the Northern seas, or hunts whale in the Southern ocean, should be encompassed by her laws with comfort and protection, as much as within the arms of Cape Ann or Cape Cod. And this kidnapping is suffered within our own land and federation, whilst the fourth article of the Constitution of the United States ordains in terms, that, "The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States." If such a damnable outrage can be committed on the person of a citizen with impunity, let the Governor break the broad seal of the State; he bears the sword in vain.[1] The Governor of Massachusetts is a trifler; the State-House in Boston is a play-house; the General Court is a dishonored body, if they make laws which they cannot execute. The great-hearted Puritans have left no posterity. The rich men may walk in State Street, but they walk without honor; and the farmers may brag their democracy in the country, but they are disgraced men. If the State has no power to defend its own people in its own

shipping, because it has delegated that power to the Federal Government, has it no representation in the Federal Government?' Are those men dumb? I am no lawyer, and cannot indicate the forms applicable to the case, but here is something which transcends all forms. Let the senators and representatives of the State, containing a population of a million freemen, go in a body before the Congress and say that they have a demand to make on them, so imperative that all functions of government must stop until it is satisfied. If ordinary legislation cannot reach it, then extraordinary must be applied. The Congress should instruct the President to send to those ports of Charleston, Savannah and New Orleans such orders and such force as should release, forthwith, all such citizens of Massachusetts as were holden in prison without the allegation of any crime, and should set on foot the strictest inquisition to discover where such persons, brought into slavery by these local laws at any time heretofore, may now be. That first; and then, let order be taken to indemnify all such as have been incarcerated. As for dangers to the Union, from such demands! — the Union already is at an end when the first citizen of Massachusetts is thus

outraged. Is it an union and covenant in which the State of Massachusetts agrees to be imprisoned, and the State of Carolina to imprison?[1] Gentlemen, I am loath to say harsh things, and perhaps I know too little of politics for the smallest weight to attach to any censure of mine, — but I am at a loss how to characterize the tameness and silence of the two senators and the ten representatives of the State at Washington. To what purpose have we clothed each of those representatives with the power of seventy thousand persons, and each senator with near half a million, if they are to sit dumb at their desks and see their constituents captured and sold; — perhaps to gentlemen sitting by them in the hall? There is a scandalous rumor that has been swelling louder of late years, — perhaps wholly false, — that members are bullied into silence by Southern gentlemen. It is so easy to omit to speak, or even to be absent when delicate things are to be handled. I may as well say, what all men feel, that whilst our very amiable and very innocent representatives and senators at Washington are accomplished lawyers and merchants, and very eloquent at dinners and at caucuses, there is a disastrous want of *men* from New England. I would gladly

make exceptions, and you will not suffer me to forget one eloquent old man, in whose veins the blood of Massachusetts rolls, and who singly has defended the freedom of speech, and the rights of the free, against the usurpation of the slave-holder.[1] But the reader of Congressional debates, in New England, is perplexed to see with what admirable sweetness and patience the majority of the free States are schooled and ridden by the minority of slave-holders. What if we should send thither representatives who were a particle less amiable and less innocent? I entreat you, sirs, let not this stain attach, let not this misery accumulate any longer. If the managers of our political parties are too prudent and too cold; — if, most unhappily, the ambitious class of young men and political men have found out that these neglected victims are poor and without weight; that they have no graceful hospitalities to offer; no valuable business to throw into any man's hands, no strong vote to cast at the elections; and therefore may with impunity be left in their chains or to the chance of chains, — then let the citizens in their primary capacity take up their cause on this very ground, and say to the government of the State, and of the Union, that government exists to

defend the weak and the poor and the injured party; the rich and the strong can better take care of themselves. And as an omen and assurance of success, I point you to the bright example which England set you, on this day, ten years ago.

There are other comparisons and other imperative duties which come sadly to mind, — but I do not wish to darken the hours of this day by crimination; I turn gladly to the rightful theme, to the bright aspects of the occasion.

This event was a moral revolution. The history of it is before you. Here was no prodigy, no fabulous hero, no Trojan horse, no bloody war, but all was achieved by plain means of plain men, working not under a leader, but under a sentiment. Other revolutions have been the insurrection of the oppressed; this was the repentance of the tyrant. It was the masters revolting from their mastery. The slave-holder said, 'I will not hold slaves.' The end was noble and the means were pure. Hence the elevation and pathos of this chapter of history. The lives of the advocates are pages of greatness, and the connection of the eminent senators with this question constitutes the immortalizing moments of those men's lives. The bare enunciation of

the theses at which the lawyers and legislators arrived, gives a glow to the heart of the reader. Lord Chancellor Northington is the author of the famous sentence, "As soon as any man puts his foot on English ground, he becomes free." "I was a slave," said the counsel of Somerset, speaking for his client, "for I was in America: I am now in a country where the common rights of mankind are known and regarded." Granville Sharpe filled the ear of the judges with the sound principles that had from time to time been affirmed by the legal authorities: "Derived power cannot be superior to the power from which it is derived:" "The reasonableness of the law is the soul of the law:" "It is better to suffer every evil, than to consent to any." Out it would come, the God's truth, out it came, like a bolt from a cloud, for all the mumbling of the lawyers. One feels very sensibly in all this history that a great heart and soul are behind there, superior to any man, and making use of each, in turn, and infinitely attractive to every person according to the degree of reason in his own mind, so that this cause has had the power to draw to it every particle of talent and of worth in England, from the beginning. All the great geniuses of the British

senate, Fox, Pitt, Burke, Grenville, Sheridan, Grey, Canning, ranged themselves on its side; the poet Cowper wrote for it: Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, in this country, all recorded their votes. All men remember the subtlety and the fire of indignation which the "Edinburgh Review" contributed to the cause; and every liberal mind, poet, preacher, moralist, statesman, has had the fortune to appear somewhere for this cause. On the other part, appeared the reign of pounds and shillings, and all manner of rage and stupidity; a resistance which drew from Mr. Huddlestone in Parliament the observation, "That a curse attended this trade even in the mode of defending it. By a certain fatality, none but the vilest arguments were brought forward, which corrupted the very persons who used them. Every one of these was built on the narrow ground of interest, of pecuniary profit, of sordid gain, in opposition to every motive that had reference to humanity, justice, and religion, or to that great principle which comprehended them all." This moral force perpetually reinforces and dignifies the friends of this cause. It gave that tenacity to their point which has insured ultimate triumph; and it gave that superiority in reason, in imagery, in eloquence,

which makes in all countries anti-slavery meetings so attractive to the people, and has made it a proverb in Massachusetts, that "eloquence is dog-cheap at the anti-slavery chapel."

I will say further that we are indebted mainly to this movement and to the continuers of it, for the popular discussion of every point of practical ethics, and a reference of every question to the absolute standard. It is notorious that the political, religious and social schemes, with which the minds of men are now most occupied, have been matured, or at least broached, in the free and daring discussions of these assemblies. Men have become aware, through the emancipation and kindred events, of the presence of powers which, in their days of darkness, they had overlooked. Virtuous men will not again rely on political agents. They have found out the deleterious effect of political association. Up to this day we have allowed to statesmen a paramount social standing, and we bow low to them as to the great. We cannot extend this deference to them any longer. The secret cannot be kept, that the seats of power are filled by underlings, ignorant, timid and selfish to a degree to destroy all claim, excepting that on compassion, to the society of the just and generous. What happened

notoriously to an American ambassador in England, that he found himself compelled to palter and to disguise the fact that he was a slave-breeder, happens to men of state. Their vocation is a presumption against them among well-meaning people. The superstition respecting power and office is going to the ground. The stream of human affairs flows its own way, and is very little affected by the activity of legislators. What great masses of men wish done, will be done; and they do not wish it for a freak, but because it is their state and natural end. There are now other energies than force, other than political, which no man in future can allow himself to disregard. There is direct conversation and influence. A man is to make himself felt by his proper force. The tendency of things runs steadily to this point, namely, to put every man on his merits, and to give him so much power as he naturally exerts, — no more, no less. Of course, the timid and base persons, all who are conscious of no worth in themselves, and who owe all their place to the opportunities which the older order of things allowed them, to deceive and defraud men, shudder at the change, and would fain silence every honest voice, and lock up every house

where liberty and innovation can be pleaded for. They would raise mobs, for fear is very cruel. But the strong and healthy yeomen and husbands of the land, the self-sustaining class of inventive and industrious men, fear no competition or superiority. Come what will, their faculty cannot be spared.

The First of August marks the entrance of a new element into modern politics, namely, the civilization of the negro. A man is added to the human family. Not the least affecting part of this history of abolition is the annihilation of the old indecent nonsense about the nature of the negro. In the case of the ship Zong, in 1781, whose master had thrown one hundred and thirty-two slaves alive into the sea, to cheat the underwriters, the first jury gave a verdict in favor of the master and owners: they had a right to do what they had done. Lord Mansfield is reported to have said on the bench, "The matter left to the jury is, — Was it from necessity? For they had no doubt — though it shocks one very much — that the case of slaves was the same as if horses had been thrown overboard. It is a very shocking case." But a more enlightened and humane opinion began to prevail. Mr. Clarkson, early in his career, made

a collection of African productions and manufactures, as specimens of the arts and culture of the negro; comprising cloths and loom, weapons, polished stones and woods, leather, glass, dyes, ornaments, soap, pipe-bowls and trinkets. These he showed to Mr. Pitt, who saw and handled them with extreme interest. "On sight of these," says Clarkson, "many sublime thoughts seemed to rush at once into his mind, some of which he expressed;" and hence appeared to arise a project which was always dear to him, of the civilization of Africa, — a dream which forever elevates his fame. In 1791, Mr. Wilberforce announced to the House of Commons, "We have already gained one victory: we have obtained for these poor creatures the recognition of their human nature, which for a time was most shamefully denied them." It was the sarcasm of Montesquieu, "it would not do to suppose that negroes were men, lest it should turn out that whites were not;" for the white has, for ages, done what he could to keep the negro in that hoggish state. His laws have been furies. It now appears that the negro race is, more than any other, susceptible of rapid civilization. The emancipation is observed, in the islands, to have wrought for the negro a benefit as sudden as

when a thermometer is brought out of the shade into the sun. It has given him eyes and ears. If, before, he was taxed with such stupidity, or such defective vision, that he could not set a table square to the walls of an apartment, he is now the principal if not the only mechanic in the West Indies; and is, besides, an architect, a physician, a lawyer, a magistrate, an editor, and a valued and increasing political power. The recent testimonies of Sturge, of Thome and Kimball, of Gurney, of Philippo, are very explicit on this point, the capacity and the success of the colored and the black population in employments of skill, of profit and of trust; and best of all is the testimony to their moderation. They receive hints and advances from the whites that they will be gladly received as subscribers to the Exchange, as members of this or that committee of trust. They hold back, and say to each other that "social position is not to be gained by pushing."

I have said that this event interests us because it came mainly from the concession of the whites; I add, that in part it is the earning of the blacks. They won the pity and respect which they have received, by their powers and native endowments. I think this a circumstance of the high-

est import. Their whole future is in it. Our planet, before the age of written history, had its races of savages, like the generations of sour paste, or the animalcules that wiggle and bite in a drop of putrid water. Who cares for these or for their wars? We do not wish a world of bugs or of birds; neither afterward of Scythians, Caraibs or Feejees. The grand style of Nature, her great periods, is all we observe in them. Who cares for oppressing whites, or oppressed blacks, twenty centuries ago, more than for bad dreams? Eaters and food are in the harmony of Nature; and there too is the germ forever protected, unfolding gigantic leaf after leaf, a newer flower, a richer fruit, in every period, yet its next product is never to be guessed. It will only save what is worth saving; and it saves not by compassion, but by power. It appoints no police to guard the lion but his teeth and claws; no fort or city for the bird but his wings, no rescue for flies and mites but their spawning numbers, which no ravages can overcome. It deals with men after the same manner. If they are rude and foolish, down they must go. When at last in a race a new principle appears, an idea, — *that* conserves it; ideas only save races. If the black man is feeble and not important to

the existing races, not on a parity with the best race, the black man must serve, and be exterminated.' But if the black man carries in his bosom an indispensable element of a new and coming civilization; for the sake of that element, no wrong nor strength nor circumstance can hurt him: he will survive and play his part. So now, the arrival in the world of such men as Toussaint, and the Haytian heroes, or of the leaders of their race in Barbadoes and Jamaica, outweighs in good omen all the English and American humanity. The anti-slavery of the whole world is dust in the balance before this, — is a poor squeamishness and nervousness: the might and the right are here: here is the anti-slave: here is man: and if you have man, black or white is an insignificance. The intellect, — that is miraculous! Who has it, has the talisman: his skin and bones, though they were of the color of night, are transparent, and the everlasting stars shine through, with attractive beams. But a compassion for that which is not and cannot be useful or lovely, is degrading and futile. All the songs and newspapers and money subscriptions and vituperation of such as do not think with us, will avail nothing against a fact. I say to you, you must save yourself, black or

white, man or woman; other help is none. I esteem the occasion of this jubilee to be the proud discovery that the black race can contend with the white: that in the great anthem which we call history, a piece of many parts and vast compass, after playing a long time a very low and subdued accompaniment, they perceive the time arrived when they can strike in with effect and take a master's part in the music. The civility of the world has reached that pitch that their more moral genius is becoming indispensable, and the quality of this race is to be honored for itself. For this, they have been preserved in sandy deserts, in rice-swamps, in kitchens and shoe-shops, so long: now let them emerge, clothed and in their own form.

There remains the very elevated consideration which the subject opens, but which belongs to more abstract views than we are now taking, this, namely, that the civility of no race can be perfect whilst another race is degraded. It is a doctrine alike of the oldest and of the newest philosophy, that man is one, and that you cannot injure any member, without a sympathetic injury to all the members. America is not civil, whilst Africa is barbarous.[1]

These considerations seem to leave no choice

for the action of the intellect and the conscience of the country. There have been moments in this, as well as in every piece of moral history, when there seemed room for the infusions of a skeptical philosophy; when it seemed doubtful whether brute force would not triumph in the eternal struggle. I doubt not that, sometimes, a despairing negro, when jumping over the ship's sides to escape from the white devils who surrounded him, has believed there was no vindication of right; it is horrible to think of, but it seemed so. I doubt not that sometimes the negro's friend, in the face of scornful and brutal hundreds of traders and drivers, has felt his heart sink. Espècially, it seems to me, some degree of despondency is pardonable, when he observes the men of conscience and of intellect, his own natural allies and champions, — those whose attention should be nailed to the grand objects of this cause, so hotly offended by whatever incidental petulances or infirmities of indiscreet defenders of the negro, as to permit themselves to be ranged with the enemies of the human race; and names which should be the alarums of liberty and the watchwords of truth, are mixed up with all the rotten rabble of selfishness and tyranny.[1] I assure myself that this coldness

and blindness will pass away. A single noble wind of sentiment will scatter them forever. I am sure that the good and wise elders, the ardent and generous youth, will not permit what is incidental and exceptional to withdraw their devotion from the essential and permanent characters of the question. There have been moments, I said, when men might be forgiven who doubted. Those moments are past. Seen in masses, it cannot be disputed, there is progress in human society. There is a blessed necessity by which the interest of men is always driving them to the right; and, again, making all crime mean and ugly. The genius of the Saxon race, friendly to liberty; the enterprise, the very muscular vigor of this nation, are inconsistent with slavery. The Intellect, with blazing eye, looking through history from the beginning onward, gazes on this blot and it disappears. The sentiment of Right, once very low and indistinct, but ever more articulate, because it is the voice of the universe, pronounces Freedom. The Power that built this fabric of things affirms it in the heart; and in the history of the First of August, has made a sign to the ages, of his will.

V

WAR

The archangel Hope
Looks to the azure cope,
Waits through dark ages for the morn,
Defeated day by day, but unto Victory born.

WAR

IT has been a favorite study of modern philosophy to indicate the steps of human progress, to watch the rising of a thought in one man's mind, the communication of it to a few, to a small minority, its expansion and general reception, until it publishes itself to the world by destroying the existing laws and institutions, and the generation of new. Looked at in this general and historical way, many things wear a very different face from that they show near by, and one at a time, — and, particularly, war. War, which to sane men at the present day begins to look like an epidemic insanity, breaking out here and there like the cholera or influenza, infecting men's brains instead of their bowels, — when seen in the remote past, in the infancy of society, appears a part of the connection of events, and, in its place, necessary.

As far as history has preserved to us the slow unfoldings of any savage tribe, it is not easy to see how war could be avoided by such wild, passionate, needy, ungoverned, strong-bodied creatures. For in the infancy of society, when a thin population and improvidence make the

supply of food and of shelter insufficient and very precarious, and when hunger, thirst, ague and frozen limbs universally take precedence of the wants of the mind and the heart, the necessities of the strong will certainly be satisfied at the cost of the weak, at whatever peril of future revenge. It is plain, too, that in the first dawnings of the religious sentiment, *that* blends itself with their passions and is oil to the fire. Not only every tribe has war-gods, religious festivals in victory, but *religious wars*.

The student of history acquiesces the more readily in this copious bloodshed of the early annals, bloodshed in God's name too, when he learns that it is a temporary and preparatory state, and does actively forward the culture of man. War educates the senses, calls into action the will, perfects the physical constitution, brings men into such swift and close collision in critical moments that man measures man. On its own scale, on the virtues it loves, it endures no counterfeit, but shakes the whole society until every atom falls into the place its specific gravity assigns it.[1] It presently finds the value of good sense and of foresight, and Ulysses takes rank next to Achilles. The leaders, picked men of a courage and vigor tried and augmented in fifty

battles, are emulous to distinguish themselves above each other by new merits, as clemency, hospitality, splendor of living. The people imitate the chiefs. The strong tribe, in which war has become an art, attack and conquer their neighbors, and teach them their arts and virtues. New territory, augmented numbers and extended interests call out new virtues and abilities, and the tribe makes long strides. And, finally, when much progress has been made, all its secrets of wisdom and art are disseminated by its invasions. Plutarch, in his essay On the Fortune of Alexander, considers the invasion and conquest of the East by Alexander as one of the most bright and pleasing pages in history; and it must be owned he gives sound reason for his opinion. It had the effect of uniting into one great interest the divided commonwealths of Greece, and infusing a new and more enlarged public spirit into the councils of their statesmen. It carried the arts and language and philosophy of the Greeks into the sluggish and barbarous nations of Persia, Assyria and India. It introduced the arts of husbandry among tribes of hunters and shepherds. It weaned the Scythians and Persians from some cruel and licentious practices to a more civil way of life. It introduced the

sacredness of marriage among them. It built seventy cities, and sowed the Greek customs and humane laws over Asia, and united hostile nations under one code. It brought different families of the human race together, — to blows at first, but afterwards to truce, to trade and to intermarriage. It would be very easy to show analogous benefits that have resulted from military movements of later ages.

Considerations of this kind lead us to a true view of the nature and office of war. We see it is the subject of all history; that it has been the principal employment of the most conspicuous men; that it is at this moment the delight of half the world, of almost all young and ignorant persons; that it is exhibited to us continually in the dumb show of brute nature, where war between tribes, and between individuals of the same tribe, perpetually rages. The microscope reveals miniature butchery in atomies and infinitely small biters that swim and fight in an illuminated drop of water; and the little globe is but a too faithful miniature of the large.

What does all this war, beginning from the lowest races and reaching up to man, signify? Is it not manifest that it covers a great and

beneficent principle, which Nature had deeply at heart? What is that principle? — It is self-help. Nature implants with life the instinct of self-help, perpetual struggle to be, to resist opposition, to attain to freedom, to attain to a mastery and the security of a permanent, self-defended being; and to each creature these objects are made so dear that it risks its life continually in the struggle for these ends.

But whilst this principle, necessarily, is inwrought into the fabric of every creature, yet it is but *one* instinct; and though a primary one, or we may say the very first, yet the appearance of the other instincts immediately modifies and controls this; turns its energies into harmless, useful and high courses, showing thereby what was its ultimate design; and, finally, takes out its fangs. The instinct of self-help is very early unfolded in the coarse and merely brute form of war, only in the childhood and imbecility of the other instincts, and remains in that form only until their development. It is the ignorant and childish part of mankind that is the fighting part. Idle and vacant minds want excitement, as all boys kill cats. Bull-baiting, cockpits and the boxer's ring are the enjoyment of the part of society whose animal nature alone has been

developed. In some parts of this country, where the intellectual and moral faculties have as yet scarcely any culture, the absorbing topic of all conversation is whipping; who fought, and which whipped? Of man, boy or beast, the only trait that much interests the speakers is the pugnacity.' And why? Because the speaker has as yet no other image of manly activity and virtue, none of endurance, none of perseverance, none of charity, none of the attainment of truth. Put him into a circle of cultivated men, where the conversation broaches the great questions that besiege the human reason, and he would be dumb and unhappy, as an Indian in church.

To men of a sedate and mature spirit, in whom is any knowledge or mental activity, the detail of battle becomes insupportably tedious and revolting. It is like the talk of one of those monomaniacs whom we sometimes meet in society, who converse on horses; and Fontenelle expressed a volume of meaning when he said, "I hate war, for it spoils conversation."

Nothing is plainer than that the sympathy with war is a juvenile and temporary state. Not only the moral sentiment, but trade, learning and whatever makes intercourse, conspire to put it down. Trade, as all men know, is the

antagonist of war. Wherever there is no property, the people will put on the knapsack for bread; but trade is instantly endangered and destroyed. And, moreover, trade brings men to look each other in the face, and gives the parties the knowledge that these enemies over sea or over the mountain are such men as we; who laugh and grieve, who love and fear, as we do. And learning and art, and especially religion weave ties that make war look like fratricide, as it is. And as all history is the picture of war, as we have said, so it is no less true that it is the record of the mitigation and decline of war. Early in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Italian cities had grown so populous and strong that they forced the rural nobility to dismantle their castles, which were dens of cruelty, and come and reside in the towns. The popes, to their eternal honor, declared religious jubilees, during which all hostilities were suspended throughout Christendom, and man had a breathing space. The increase of civility has abolished the use of poison and of torture, once supposed as necessary as navies now. And, finally, the art of war, what with gunpowder and tactics, has made, as all men know, battles less frequent and less murderous.

By all these means, war has been steadily on the decline; and we read with astonishment of the beastly fighting of the old times. Only in Elizabeth's time, out of the European waters, piracy was all but universal. The proverb was, — "No peace beyond the line;" and the seaman shipped on the buccaneer's bargain, "No prey, no pay." The celebrated Cavendish, who was thought in his times a good Christian man, wrote thus to Lord Hunsdon, on his return from a voyage round the world: "Sept. 1588. It hath pleased Almighty God to suffer me to circumpass the whole globe of the world, entering in at the Strait of Magellan, and returning by the Cape of Buena Esperança; in which voyage, I have either discovered or brought certain intelligence of all the rich places of the world, which were ever discovered by any Christian. I navigated along the coast of Chili, Peru, and New Spain, *where I made great spoils. I burnt and sunk nineteen sail of ships, small and great. All the villages and towns that ever I landed at, I burned and spoiled.* And had I not been discovered upon the coast, I had taken great quantity of treasure. The matter of most profit to me was a great ship of the king's, which I took at California," etc. And the good Cavendish

piously begins this statement, — "It hath pleased Almighty God."

Indeed, our American annals have preserved the vestiges of barbarous warfare down to more recent times. I read in Williams's History of Maine, that "Assacombuit, the Sagamore of the Anagunticook tribe, was remarkable for his turpitude and ferocity above all other known Indians; that, in 1705, Vaudreuil sent him to France, where he was introduced to the king. When he appeared at court, he lifted up his hand and said, 'This hand has slain a hundred and fifty of your majesty's enemies within the territories of New England.' This so pleased the king that he knighted him, and ordered a pension of eight livres a day to be paid him during life." This valuable person, on his return to America, took to killing his own neighbors and kindred, with such appetite that his tribe combined against him, and would have killed him had he not fled his country forever.

The scandal which we feel in such facts certainly shows that we have got on a little. All history is the decline of war, though the slow decline. All that society has yet gained is mitigation: the doctrine of the right of war still remains.

For ages (for ideas work in ages, and animate vast societies of men) the human race has gone on under the tyranny — shall I so call it? — of this first brutish form of their effort to be men; that is, for ages they have shared so much of the nature of the lower animals, the tiger and the shark, and the savages of the water-drop. They have nearly exhausted all the good and all the evil of this form: they have held as fast to this degradation as their worst enemy could desire; but all things have an end, and so has this.[1] The eternal germination of the better has unfolded new powers, new instincts, which were really concealed under this rough and base rind. The sublime question has startled one and another happy soul in different quarters of the globe, — Cannot love be, as well as hate? Would not love answer the same end, or even a better? Cannot peace be, as well as war?

This thought is no man's invention, neither St. Pierre's nor Rousseau's, but the rising of the general tide in the human soul, — and rising highest, and first made visible, in the most simple and pure souls, who have therefore announced it to us beforehand; but presently we all see it. It has now become so distinct as to be a social thought: societies can be formed on

it. It is expounded, illustrated, defined, with different degrees of clearness; and its actualization, or the measures it should inspire, predicted according to the light of each seer.

The idea itself is the epoch; the fact that it has become so distinct to any small number of persons as to become a subject of prayer and hope, of concert and discussion, — *that* is the commanding fact. This having come, much more will follow. Revolutions go not backward. The star once risen, though only one man in the hemisphere has yet seen its upper limb in the horizon, will mount and mount, until it becomes visible to other men, to multitudes, and climbs the zenith of all eyes. And so it is not a great matter how long men refuse to believe the advent of peace: war is on its last legs; and a universal peace is as sure as is the prevalence of civilization over barbarism, of liberal governments over feudal forms. The question for us is only *How soon?*

That the project of peace should appear visionary to great numbers of sensible men; should appear laughable even, to numbers; should appear to the grave and good-natured to be embarrassed with extreme practical difficulties, — is very natural. 'This is a poor, tedious

society of yours,' they say: 'we do not see what good can come of it. Peace! why, we are all at peace now. But if a foreign nation should wantonly insult or plunder our commerce, or, worse yet, should land on our shores to rob and kill, you would not have us sit, and be robbed and killed? You mistake the times; you overestimate the virtue of men. You forget that the quiet which now sleeps in cities and in farms, which lets the wagon go unguarded and the farmhouse unbolted, rests on the perfect understanding of all men that the musket, the halter and the jail stand behind there, ready to punish any disturber of it. All admit that this would be the best policy, if the world were all a church, if all the men were the best men, if all would agree to accept this rule. But it is absurd for one nation to attempt it alone.'

In the first place, we answer that we never make much account of objections which merely respect the actual state of the world at this moment, but which admit the general expediency and permanent excellence of the project. What is the best must be the true; and what is true — that is, what is at bottom fit and agreeable to the constitution of man — must at last prevail over all obstruction and all opposition

There is no good now enjoyed by society that was not once as problematical and visionary as this. It is the tendency of the true interest of man to become his desire and steadfast aim.

But, further, it is a lesson which all history teaches wise men, to put trust in ideas, and not in circumstances. We have all grown up in the sight of frigates and navy-yards, of armed forts and islands, of arsenals and militia. The reference to any foreign register will inform us of the number of thousand or million men that are now under arms in the vast colonial system of the British Empire, of Russia, Austria and France; and one is scared to find at what a cost the peace of the globe is kept. This vast apparatus of artillery, of fleets, of stone bastions and trenches and embankments; this incessant patrolling of sentinels; this waving of national flags; this reveille and evening gun; this martial music and endless playing of marches and singing of military and naval songs seem to us to constitute an imposing actual, which will not yield in centuries to the feeble, deprecatory voices of a handful of friends of peace.

Thus always we are daunted by the appearances; not seeing that their whole value lies at bottom in the state of mind. It is really a

thought that built this portentous war-establishment, and a thought shall also melt it away.[1] Every nation and every man instantly surround themselves with a material apparatus which exactly corresponds to their moral state, or their state of thought. Observe how every truth and every error, each a *thought* of some man's mind, clothes itself with societies, houses, cities, language, ceremonies, newspapers. Observe the ideas of the present day, — orthodoxy, skepticism, missions, popular education, temperance, anti-masonry, anti-slavery; see how each of these abstractions has embodied itself in an imposing apparatus in the community; and how timber, brick, lime and stone have flown into convenient shape, obedient to the master-idea reigning in the minds of many persons.[2]

You shall hear, some day, of a wild fancy which some man has in his brain, of the mischief of secret oaths. Come again one or two years afterwards, and you shall see it has built great houses of solid wood and brick and mortar. You shall see a hundred presses printing a million sheets; you shall see men and horses and wheels made to walk, run and roll for it: this great body of matter thus executing that one man's wild thought. This happens daily, yearly

about us, with half thoughts, often with flimsy lies, pieces of policy and speculation. With good nursing they will last three or four years before they will come to nothing. But when a truth appears, — as, for instance, a perception in the wit of one Columbus that there is land in the Western Sea; though he alone of all men has that thought, and they all jeer, — it will build ships; it will build fleets; it will carry over half Spain and half England; it will plant a colony, a state, nations and half a globe full of men.

We surround ourselves always, according to our freedom and ability, with true images of ourselves in things, whether it be ships or books or cannons or churches. The standing army, the arsenal, the camp and the gibbet do not appertain to man. They only serve as an index to show where man is now; what a bad, ungoverned temper he has; what an ugly neighbor he is; how his affections halt; how low his hope lies. He who loves the bristle of bayonets only sees in their glitter what beforehand he feels in his heart. It is avarice and hatred; it is that quivering lip, that cold, hating eye, which built magazines and powder-houses.

It follows of course that the least change in

the man will change his circumstances; the least enlargement of his ideas, the least mitigation of his feelings in respect to other men; if, for example, he could be inspired with a tender kindness to the souls of men, and should come to feel that every man was another self with whom he might come to join, as left hand works with right. Every degree of the ascendency of this feeling would cause the most striking changes of external things: the tents would be struck; the men-of-war would rot ashore; the arms rust; the cannon would become street-posts; the pikes, a fisher's harpoon; the marching regiment would be a caravan of emigrants, *peaceful* pioneers at the fountains of the Wabash and the Missouri. And so it must and will be: bayonet and sword must first retreat a little from their ostentatious prominence; then quite hide themselves, as the sheriff's halter does now, inviting the attendance only of relations and friends; and then, lastly, will be transferred to the museums of the curious, as poisoning and torturing tools are at this day.

War and peace thus resolve themselves into a mercury of the state of cultivation. At a certain stage of his progress, the man fights, if he be of a sound body and mind. At a certain

higher stage, he makes no offensive demonstration, but is alert to repel injury, and of an unconquerable heart.[1] At a still higher stage, he comes into the region of holiness ; passion has passed away from him ; his warlike nature is all converted into an active medicinal principle ; he sacrifices himself, and accepts with alacrity wearisome tasks of denial and charity ; but, being attacked, he bears it and turns the other cheek, as one engaged, throughout his being, no longer to the service of an individual but to the common soul of all men.

Since the peace question has been before the public mind, those who affirm its right and expediency have naturally been met with objections more or less weighty. There are cases frequently put by the curious, — moral problems, like those problems in arithmetic which in long winter evenings the rustics try the hardness of their heads in ciphering out. And chiefly it is said, — Either accept this principle for better, for worse, carry it out to the end, and meet its absurd consequences ; or else, if you pretend to set an arbitrary limit, a " Thus far, no farther," then give up the principle, and take that limit which the common sense of all mankind has set, and which distinguishes offensive war as

criminal, defensive war as just. Otherwise, if you go for no war, then be consistent, and give up self-defence in the highway, in your own house. Will you push it thus far? Will you stick to your principle of non-resistance when your strong-box is broken open, when your wife and babes are insulted and slaughtered in your sight? If you say yes, you only invite the robber and assassin; and a few bloody-minded desperadoes would soon butcher the good.

In reply to this charge of absurdity on the extreme peace doctrine, as shown in the supposed consequences, I wish to say that such deductions consider only one half of the fact. They look only at the passive side of the friend of peace, only at his passivity; they quite omit to consider his activity. But no man, it may be presumed, ever embraced the cause of peace and philanthropy for the sole end and satisfaction of being plundered and slain. A man does not come the length of the spirit of martyrdom without some active purpose, some equal motive, some flaming love. If you have a nation of men who have risen to that height of moral cultivation that they will not declare war or carry arms, for they have not so much madness left in their brains, you have a nation of lovers,

of benefactors, of true, great and able men. Let me know more of that nation; I shall not find them defenceless, with idle hands swinging at their sides. I shall find them men of love, honor and truth; men of an immense industry; men whose influence is felt to the end of the earth; men whose very look and voice carry the sentence of honor and shame; and all forces yield to their energy and persuasion. Whenever we see the doctrine of peace embraced by a nation, we may be assured it will not be one that invites injury; but one, on the contrary, which has a friend in the bottom of the heart of every man, even of the violent and the base; one against which no weapon can prosper; one which is looked upon as the asylum of the human race and has the tears and the blessings of mankind.

In the second place, as far as it respects individual action in difficult and extreme cases, I will say, such cases seldom or never occur to the good and just man; nor are we careful to say, or even to know, what in such crises is to be done. A wise man will never impawn his future being and action, and decide beforehand what he shall do in a given extreme event. Nature and God will instruct him in that hour.

The question naturally arises, How is this new aspiration of the human mind to be made visible and real? How is it to pass out of thoughts into things?

Not, certainly, in the first place, *in the way of routine and mere forms*, — the universal specific of modern politics; not by organizing a society, and going through a course of resolutions and public manifestoes, and being thus formally accredited to the public and to the civility of the newspapers. We have played this game to tediousness. In some of our cities they choose noted duellists as presidents and officers of anti-duelling societies. Men who love that bloated vanity called public opinion think all is well if they have once got their bantling through a sufficient course of speeches and cheerings, of one, two, or three public meetings; as if *they* could do anything: they vote and vote, cry hurrah on both sides, no man responsible, no man caring a pin. The next season, an Indian war, or an aggression on our commerce by Malays; or the party this man votes with have an appropriation to carry through Congress: instantly he wags his head the other way, and cries, Havoc and war!

This is not to be carried by public opinion,

but by private opinion, by private conviction, by private, dear and earnest love. For the only hope of this cause is in the increased insight, and it is to be accomplished by the spontaneous teaching, of the cultivated soul, in its secret experience and meditation, — that it is now time that it should pass out of the state of beast into the state of man; it is to hear the voice of God, which bids the devils that have rended and torn him come out of him and let him now be clothed and walk forth in his right mind.

Nor, in the next place, is the peace principle to be carried into effect by fear. It can never be defended, it can never be executed, by cowards. Everything great must be done in the spirit of greatness. The manhood that has been in war must be transferred to the cause of peace, before war can lose its charm, and peace be venerable to men.

The attractiveness of war shows one thing through all the throats of artillery, the thunders of so many sieges, the sack of towns, the jousts of chivalry, the shock of hosts, — this namely, the conviction of man universally, that a man should be himself responsible, with goods, health and life, for his behavior; that he should not ask of the state protection; should ask

nothing of the state; should be himself a kingdom and a state; fearing no man; quite willing to use the opportunities and advantages that good government throw in his way, but nothing daunted, and not really the poorer if government, law and order went by the board; because in himself reside infinite resources; because he is sure of himself, and never needs to ask another what in any crisis it behooves him to do.'

What makes to us the attractiveness of the Greek heroes? of the Roman? What makes the attractiveness of that romantic style of living which is the material of ten thousand plays and romances, from Shakspeare to Scott; the feudal baron, the French, the English nobility, the Warwicks, Plantagenets? It is their absolute self-dependence. I do not wonder at the dislike some of the friends of peace have expressed at Shakspeare. The veriest churl and Jacobin cannot resist the influence of the style and manners of these haughty lords. We are affected, as boys and barbarians are, by the appearance of a few rich and wilful gentlemen who take their honor into their own keeping, defy the world, so confident are they of their courage and strength, and whose appearance

is the arrival of so much life and virtue. In dangerous times they are presently tried, and therefore their name is a flourish of trumpets. They, at least, affect us as a reality. They are not shams, but the substance of which that age and world is made. They are true heroes for their time. They make what is in their minds the greatest sacrifice. They will, for an injurious word, peril all their state and wealth, and go to the field. Take away that principle of responsibleness, and they become pirates and ruffians.[1]

This self-subsistency is the charm of war; for this self-subsistency is essential to our idea of man. But another age comes, a truer religion and ethics open, and a man puts himself under the dominion of principles. I see him to be the servant of truth, of love and of freedom, and immovable in the waves of the crowd. The man of principle, that is, the man who, without any flourish of trumpets, titles of lordship or train of guards, without any notice of his action abroad, expecting none, takes in solitude the right step uniformly, on his private choice and disdaining consequences, — does not yield, in my imagination, to any man. He is willing to be hanged at his own gate, rather than consent

to any compromise of his freedom or the suppression of his conviction. I regard no longer those names that so tingled in my ear. This is a baron of a better nobility and a stouter stomach.

The cause of peace is not the cause of cowardice. If peace is sought to be defended or preserved for the safety of the luxurious and the timid, it is a sham, and the peace will be base. War is better, and the peace will be broken. If peace is to be maintained, it must be by brave men, who have come up to the same height as the hero, namely, the will to carry their life in their hand, and stake it at any instant for their principle, but who have gone one step beyond the hero, and will not seek another man's life; — men who have, by their intellectual insight or else by their moral elevation, attained such a perception of their own intrinsic worth that they do not think property or their own body a sufficient good to be saved by such dereliction of principle as treating a man like a sheep.

If the universal cry for reform of so many inveterate abuses, with which society rings, — if the desire of a large class of young men for a faith and hope, intellectual and religious, such as they have not yet found, be an omen to be trusted;

if the disposition to rely more, in study and in action, on the unexplored riches of the human constitution, — if the search of the sublime laws of morals and the sources of hope and trust, in man, and not in books, in the present, and not in the past, proceed; if the rising generation can be provoked to think it unworthy to nestle into every abomination of the past, and shall feel the generous darings of austerity and virtue, then war has a short day, and human blood will cease to flow.

It is of little consequence in what manner, through what organs, this purpose of mercy and holiness is effected. The proposition of the Congress of Nations is undoubtedly that at which the present fabric of our society and the present course of events do point. But the mind, once prepared for the reign of principles, will easily find modes of expressing its will. There is the highest fitness in the place and time in which this enterprise is begun. Not in an obscure corner, not in a feudal Europe, not in an antiquated appanage where no onward step can be taken without rebellion, is this seed of benevolence laid in the furrow, with tears of hope; but in this broad America of God and man, where the forest is only now falling, or yet to fall, and

the green earth opened to the inundation of emigrant men from all quarters of oppression and guilt; here, where not a family, not a few men, but mankind, shall say what shall be; here, we ask, Shall it be War, or shall it be Peace?

VI

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

ADDRESS TO CITIZENS OF CONCORD

7 MAY, 1851

The Eternal Rights,
Victors over daily wrongs:
Awful victors, they misguide
Whom they will destroy,
And their coming triumph hide
In our downfall, or our joy:
They reach no term, they never sleep,
In equal strength through space abide;
Though, feigning dwarfs, they crouch and creep,
The strong they slay, the swift outstride;
Fate's grass grows rank in valley clods,
And rankly on the castled steep, —
Speak it firmly, these are gods,
Are all ghosts beside.

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

FELLOW CITIZENS: I accepted your invitation to speak to you on the great question of these days, with very little consideration of what I might have to offer: for there seems to be no option. The last year has forced us all into politics, and made it a paramount duty to seek what it is often a duty to shun. We do not breathe well. There is infamy in the air. I have a new experience. I wake in the morning with a painful sensation, which I carry about all day, and which, when traced home, is the odious remembrance of that ignominy which has fallen on Massachusetts, which robs the landscape of beauty, and takes the sunshine out of every hour. I have lived all my life in this state, and never had any experience of personal inconvenience from the laws, until now. They never came near me to any discomfort before. I find the like sensibility in my neighbors; and in that class who take no interest in the ordinary questions of party politics. There are men who are as sure indexes of the equity of legislation and of the same state of public feeling, as the barometer is of the weight

of the air, and it is a bad sign when these are discontented, for though they snuff oppression and dishonor at a distance, it is because they are more impressionable: the whole population will in a short time be as painfully affected.

Every hour brings us from distant quarters of the Union the expression of mortification at the late events in Massachusetts, and at the behavior of Boston. The tameness was indeed shocking. Boston, of whose fame for spirit and character we have all been so proud; Boston, whose citizens, intelligent people in England told me they could always distinguish by their culture among Americans; the Boston of the American Revolution, which figures so proudly in John Adams's Diary, which the whole country has been reading; Boston, spoiled by prosperity, must bow its ancient honor in the dust, and make us irretrievably ashamed. In Boston, we have said with such lofty confidence, no fugitive slave can be arrested, and now, we must transfer our vaunt to the country, and say, with a little less confidence, no fugitive man can be arrested here; at least we can brag thus until to-morrow, when the farmers also may be corrupted.

The tameness is indeed complete. The only

haste in Boston, after the rescue of Shadrach,[1] last February, was, who should first put his name on the list of volunteers in aid of the marshal. I met the smoothest of Episcopal Clergymen the other day, and allusion being made to Mr. Webster's treachery, he blandly replied, "Why, do you know I think *that* the great action of his life." It looked as if in the city and the suburbs all were involved in one hot haste of terror, — presidents of colleges, and professors, saints, and brokers, insurers, lawyers, importers, manufacturers: not an unpleasing sentiment, not a liberal recollection, not so much as a snatch of an old song for freedom, dares intrude on their passive obedience.

The panic has paralyzed the journals, with the fewest exceptions, so that one cannot open a newspaper without being disgusted by new records of shame. I cannot read longer even the local good news. When I look down the columns at the titles of paragraphs, "Education in Massachusetts," "Board of Trade," "Art Union," "Revival of Religion," what bitter mockeries. The very convenience of property, the house and land we occupy, have lost their best value, and a man looks gloomily at his children, and thinks, "What have I done that you should begin life

in dishonor?" Every liberal study is discredited, — literature and science appear effeminate, and the hiding of the head. The college, the churches, the schools, the very shops and factories are discredited; real estate, every kind of wealth, every branch of industry, every avenue to power, suffers injury, and the value of life is reduced. Just now a friend came into my house and said, "If this law shall be repealed I shall be glad that I have lived; if not I shall be sorry that I was born." What kind of law is that which extorts language like this from the heart of a free and civilized people?

One intellectual benefit we owe to the late disgraces. The crisis had the illuminating power of a sheet of lightning at midnight. It showed truth. It ended a good deal of nonsense we had been wont to hear and to repeat, on the 19th of April, the 17th of June, the 4th of July. It showed the slightness and unreliableness of our social fabric, it showed what stuff reputations are made of, what straws we dignify by office and title, and how competent we are to give counsel and help in a day of trial. It showed the shallowness of leaders; the divergence of parties from their alleged grounds; showed that men would not stick to what they had said, that the

resolutions of public bodies, or the pledges never so often given and put on record of public men, will not bind them. The fact comes out more plainly that you cannot rely on any man for the defence of truth, who is not constitutionally or by blood and temperament on that side. A man of a greedy and unscrupulous selfishness may maintain morals when they are in fashion: but he will not stick. However close Mr. Wolf's nails have been pared, however neatly he has been shaved, and tailored, and set up on end, and taught to say, "Virtue and Religion," he cannot be relied on at a pinch: he will say, morality means pricking a vein. The popular assumption that all men loved freedom, and believed in the Christian religion, was found hollow American brag; only persons who were known and tried benefactors are found standing for freedom: the sentimentalists went down-stream.[1] I question the value of our civilization, when I see that the public mind had never less hold of the strongest of all truths. The sense of injustice is blunted, — a sure sign of the shallowness of our intellect. I cannot accept the railroad and telegraph in exchange for reason and charity. It is not skill in iron locomotives that makes so fine civility, as the jealousy of

liberty. I cannot think the most judicious tubing a compensation for metaphysical debility. What is the use of admirable law-forms, and political forms, if a hurricane of party feeling and a combination of monied interests can beat them to the ground? What is the use of courts, if judges only quote authorities, and no judge exerts original jurisdiction, or recurs to first principles? What is the use of a Federal Bench, if its opinions are the political breath of the hour? And what is the use of constitutions, if all the guaranties provided by the jealousy of ages for the protection of liberty are made of no effect, when a bad act of Congress finds a willing commissioner? The levity of the public mind has been shown in the past year by the most extravagant actions. Who could have believed it, if foretold that a hundred guns would be fired in Boston on the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill? Nothing proves the want of all thought, the absence of standard in men's minds, more than the dominion of party. Here are humane people who have tears for misery, an open purse for want; who should have been the defenders of the poor man, are found his embittered enemies, rejoicing in his rendition, — merely from party ties. I thought none, that

was not ready to go on all fours, would back this law. And yet here are upright men, *compotes mentis*, husbands, fathers, trustees, friends, open, generous, brave, who can see nothing in this claim for bare humanity, and the health and honor of their native State, but canting fanaticism, sedition and "one idea." Because of this preoccupied mind, the whole wealth and power of Boston — two hundred thousand souls, and one hundred and eighty millions of money — are thrown into the scale of crime: and the poor black boy, whom the fame of Boston had reached in the recesses of a vile swamp, or in the alleys of Savannah, on arriving here finds all this force employed to catch him. The famous town of Boston is his master's hound. The learning of the universities, the culture of elegant society, the acumen of lawyers, the majesty of the Bench, the eloquence of the Christian pulpit, the stoutness of Democracy, the respectability of the Whig party are all combined to kidnap him.

The crisis is interesting as it shows the self-protecting nature of the world and of the Divine laws. It is the law of the world, — as much immorality as there is, so much misery. The greatest prosperity will in vain resist the greatest

calamity. You borrow the succour of the devil and he must have his fee. He was never known to abate a penny of his rents. In every nation all the immorality that exists breeds plagues. But of the corrupt society that exists we have never been able to combine any pure prosperity. There is always something in the very advantages of a condition which hurts it. Africa has its malformation; England has its Ireland; Germany its hatred of classes; France its love of gunpowder; Italy its Pope; and America, the most prosperous country in the Universe, has the greatest calamity in the Universe, negro slavery.

Let me remind you a little in detail how the natural retribution acts in reference to the statute which Congress passed a year ago. For these few months have shown very conspicuously its nature and impracticability. It is contravened:

1. By the sentiment of duty. An immoral law makes it a man's duty to break it, at every hazard. For virtue is the very self of every man. It is therefore a principle of law that an immoral contract is void, and that an immoral statute is void. For, as laws do not make right, and are simply declaratory of a right which already existed, it is not to be presumed

that they can so stultify themselves as to command injustice.

It is remarkable how rare in the history of tyrants is an immoral law. Some color, some indirection was always used. If you take up the volumes of the "Universal History," you will find it difficult searching. The precedents are few. It is not easy to parallel the wickedness of this American law. And that is the head and body of this discontent, that the law is immoral.

Here is a statute which enacts the crime of kidnapping, — a crime on one footing with arson and murder. A man's right to liberty is as inalienable as his right to life.

Pains seem to have been taken to give us in this statute a wrong pure from any mixture of right. If our resistance to this law is not right, there is no right. This is not meddling with other people's affairs: this is hindering other people from meddling with us. This is not going crusading into Virginia and Georgia after slaves, who, it is alleged, are very comfortable where they are: — that amiable argument falls to the ground: but this is befriending in our own State, on our own farms, a man who has taken the risk of being shot, or burned alive, or

cast into the sea, or starved to death, or suffocated in a wooden box, to get away from his driver: and this man who has run the gauntlet of a thousand miles for his freedom, the statute says, you men of Massachusetts shall hunt, and catch, and send back again to the dog-hutch he fled from.

It is contrary to the primal sentiment of duty, and therefore all men that are born are, in proportion to their power of thought and their moral sensibility, found to be the natural enemies of this law. The resistance of all moral beings is secured to it. I had thought, I confess, what must come at last would come at first, a banding of all men against the authority of this statute. I thought it a point on which all sane men were agreed, that the law must respect the public morality. I thought that all men of all conditions had been made sharers of a certain experience, that in certain rare and retired moments they had been made to see how man is man, or what makes the essence of rational beings, namely, that whilst animals have to do with eating the fruits of the ground, men have to do with rectitude, with benefit, with truth, with something which *is*, independent of appearances: and that this tie makes the

substantiality of life, this, and not their ploughing, or sailing, their trade or the breeding of families. I thought that every time a man goes back to his own thoughts, these angels receive him, talk with him, and that, in the best hours, he is uplifted in virtue of this essence, into a peace and into a power which the material world cannot give: that these moments counterbalance the years of drudgery, and that this owning of a law, be it called morals, religion, or godhead, or what you will, constituted the explanation of life, the excuse and indemnity for the errors and calamities which sadden it. In long years consumed in trifles, they remember these moments, and are consoled. I thought it was this fair mystery, whose foundations are hidden in eternity, which made the basis of human society, and of law; and that to pretend anything else, as that the acquisition of property was the end of living, was to confound all distinctions, to make the world a greasy hotel, and, instead of noble motives and inspirations, and a heaven of companions and angels around and before us, to leave us in a grimacing menagerie of monkeys and idiots. All arts, customs, societies, books, and laws, are good as they foster and concur with this spiritual element: all men are

beloved as they raise us to it; hateful as they deny or resist it. The laws especially draw their obligation only from their concurrence with it.

I am surprised that lawyers can be so blind as to suffer the principles of Law to be discredited. A few months ago, in my dismay at hearing that the Higher Law was reckoned a good joke in the courts, I took pains to look into a few law-books. I had often heard that the Bible constituted a part of every technical law library, and that it was a principle in law that immoral laws are void.

I found, accordingly, that the great jurists, Cicero, Grotius, Coke, Blackstone, Burlamaqui, Montesquieu, Vattel, Burke, Mackintosh, Jefferson, do all affirm this. I have no intention to recite these passages I had marked: — such citation indeed seems to be something cowardly (for no reasonable person needs a quotation from Blackstone to convince him that white cannot be legislated to be black), and shall content myself with reading a single passage. Blackstone admits the sovereignty "antecedent to any positive precept, of the law of Nature," among whose principles are, "that we should live on, should hurt nobody, and should render unto every one his due,"

etc. "*No human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this.*" "Nay, if any human law should allow or enjoin us to commit a crime" (his instance is murder), "we are bound to transgress that human law; or else we must offend both the natural and divine." Lord Coke held that where an Act of Parliament is against common right and reason, the common law shall control it, and adjudge it to be void. Chief Justice Hobart, Chief Justice Holt, and Chief Justice Mansfield held the same.

Lord Mansfield, in the case of the slave Somerset, wherein the *dicta* of Lords Talbot and Hardwicke had been cited, to the effect of carrying back the slave to the West Indies, said, "I care not for the supposed *dicta* of judges, however eminent, if they be contrary to all principle." Even the *Canon Law* says (*in malis promissis non expedit servare fidem*), "Neither allegiance nor oath can bind to obey that which is wrong."

No engagement (to a sovereign) can oblige or even authorize a man to violate the laws of Nature. All authors who have any conscience or modesty agree that a person ought not to obey such commands as are evidently contrary to the laws of God. Those governors of places

who bravely refused to execute the barbarous orders of Charles IX. for the famous "Massacre of St. Bartholomew," have been universally praised; and the court did not dare to punish them, at least openly. "Sire," said the brave Orte, governor of Bayonne, in his letter, "I have communicated your majesty's command to your faithful inhabitants and warriors in the garrison, and I have found there only good citizens, and brave soldiers; not one hangman: therefore, both they and I must humbly entreat your majesty to be pleased to employ your arms and lives in things that are possible, however hazardous they may be, and we will exert ourselves to the last drop of our blood." [1]

The practitioners should guard this dogma well, as the palladium of the profession, as their anchor in the respect of mankind. Against a principle like this, all the arguments of Mr. Webster are the spray of a child's squirt against a granite wall.

2. It is contravened by all the sentiments. How can a law be enforced that fines pity, and imprisons charity? As long as men have bowels, they will disobey. You know that the Act of Congress of September 18, 1850, is a law which every one of you will break on the earliest occa-

sion. There is not a manly Whig, or a manly Democrat, of whom, if a slave were hidden in one of our houses from the hounds, we should not ask with confidence to lend his wagon in aid of his escape, and he would lend it. The man would be too strong for the partisan.

And here I may say that it is absurd, what I often hear, to accuse the friends of freedom in the North with being the occasion of the new stringency of the Southern slave-laws. If you starve or beat the orphan, in my presence, and I accuse your cruelty, can I help it? In the words of Electra in the Greek tragedy, "'T is you that say it, not I. You do the deeds, and your ungodly deeds find me the words." Will you blame the ball for rebounding from the floor, blame the air for rushing in where a vacuum is made or the boiler for exploding under pressure of steam? These facts are after laws of the world, and so is it law, that, when justice is violated, anger begins. The very defence which the God of Nature has provided for the innocent against cruelty is the sentiment of indignation and pity in the bosom of the beholder. Mr. Webster tells the President that "he has been in the North, and he has found no man, whose opinion is of any weight, who is opposed

to the law." Oh, Mr. President, trust not the information! The gravid old Universe goes spawning on; the womb conceives and the breasts give suck to thousands and millions of hairy babes formed not in the image of your statute, but in the image of the Universe; too many to be bought off; too many than they can be rich, and therefore peaceable; and necessitated to express first or last every feeling of the heart. You can keep no secret, for whatever is true some of them will unreasonably say. You can commit no crime, for they are created in their sentiments conscious of and hostile to it; and unless you can suppress the newspaper, pass a law against book-shops, gag the English tongue in America, all short of this is futile. This dreadful English Speech is saturated with songs, proverbs and speeches that flatly contradict and defy every line of Mr. Mason's statute. Nay, unless you can draw a sponge over those seditious Ten Commandments which are the root of our European and American civilization; and over that eleventh commandment, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you," your labor is vain.

3. It is contravened by the written laws themselves, because the sentiments, of course,

write the statutes. Laws are merely declaratory of the natural sentiments of mankind, and the language of all permanent laws will be in contradiction to any immoral enactment. And thus it happens here: Statute fights against Statute. By the law of Congress March 2, 1807, it is piracy and murder, punishable with death, to enslave a man on the coast of Africa. By law of Congress September, 1850, it is a high crime and misdemeanor, punishable with fine and imprisonment, to resist the reënslaving a man on the coast of America. Off soundings, it is piracy and murder to enslave him. On soundings, it is fine and prison not to reënslave. What kind of legislation is this? What kind of constitution which covers it? And yet the crime which the second law ordains is greater than the crime which the first law forbids under penalty of the gibbet. For it is a greater crime to reënslave a man who has shown himself fit for freedom, than to enslave him at first, when it might be pretended to be a mitigation of his lot as a captive in war.

4. It is contravened by the mischiefs it operates. A wicked law cannot be executed by good men, and must be by bad. Flagitious men must be employed, and every act of theirs is a

stab at the public peace. It cannot be executed at such a cost, and so it brings a bribe in its hand. This law comes with infamy in it, and out of it. It offers a bribe in its own clauses for the consummation of the crime. To serve it, low and mean people are found by the groping of the government. No government ever found it hard to pick up tools for base actions. If you cannot find them in the huts of the poor, you shall find them in the palaces of the rich. Vanity can buy some, ambition others, and money others. The first execution of the law, as was inevitable, was a little hesitating; the second was easier; and the glib officials became, in a few weeks, quite practised and handy at stealing men. But worse, not the officials alone are bribed, but the whole community is solicited. The scowl of the community is attempted to be averted by the mischievous whisper, "Tariff and Southern market, if you will be quiet: no tariff and loss of Southern market, if you dare to murmur." I wonder that our acute people who have learned that the cheapest police is dear schools, should not find out that an immoral law costs more than the loss of the custom of a Southern city.

The humiliating scandal of great men warp-

ing right into wrong was followed up very fast by the cities. New York advertised in Southern markets that it would go for slavery, and posted the names of merchants who would not. Boston, alarmed, entered into the same design. Philadelphia, more fortunate, had no conscience at all, and, in this auction of the rights of mankind, rescinded all its legislation against slavery. And the Boston "Advertiser," and the "Courier," in these weeks, urge the same course on the people of Massachusetts. Nothing remains in this race of roguery but to coax Connecticut or Maine to outbid us all by adopting slavery into its constitution.

Great is the mischief of a legal crime. Every person who touches this business is contaminated. There has not been in our lifetime another moment when public men were personally lowered by their political action. But here are gentlemen whose believed probity was the confidence and fortification of multitudes, who, by fear of public opinion, or through the dangerous ascendency of Southern manners, have been drawn into the support of this foul business. We poor men in the country who might once have thought it an honor to shake hands with them, or to dine at their boards, would now

shrink from their touch, nor could they enter our humblest doors. You have a law which no man can obey, or abet the obeying, without loss of self-respect and forfeiture of the name of gentleman. What shall we say of the functionary by whom the recent rendition was made? If he has rightly defined his powers, and has no authority to try the case, but only to prove the prisoner's identity, and remand him, what office is this for a reputable citizen to hold? No man of honor can sit on that bench. It is the extension of the planter's whipping-post; and its incumbents must rank with a class from which the turnkey, the hangman and the informer are taken, necessary functionaries, it may be, in a state, but to whom the dislike and the ban of society universally attaches.

5. These resistances appear in the history of the statute, in the retributions which speak so loud in every part of this business, that I think a tragic poet will know how to make it a lesson for all ages. Mr. Webster's measure was, he told us, final. It was a pacification, it was a suppression, a measure of conciliation and adjustment. These were his words at different times: "there was to be no parleying more;" it was "irrepealable." Does it look final now?

His final settlement has dislocated the foundations. The state-house shakes likes a tent. His pacification has brought all the honesty in every house, all scrupulous and good-hearted men, all women, and all children, to accuse the law. It has brought United States swords into the streets, and chains round the court-house. "A measure of pacification and union." What is its effect? To make one sole subject for conversation and painful thought throughout the continent, namely, slavery. There is not a man of thought or of feeling but is concentrating his mind on it. There is not a clerk but recites its statistics; not a politician but is watching its incalculable energy in the elections; not a jurist but is hunting up precedents; not a moralist but is prying into its quality; not an economist but is computing its profit and loss: Mr. Webster can judge whether this sort of solar microscope brought to bear on his law is likely to make opposition less. The only benefit that has accrued from the law is its service to education. It has been like a university to the entire people. It has turned every dinner-table into a debating-club, and made every citizen a student of natural law. When a moral quality comes into politics, when a right is invaded, the discus-

sion draws on deeper sources : general principles are laid bare, which cast light on the whole frame of society. And it is cheering to behold what champions the emergency called to this poor black boy ; what subtlety, what logic, what learning, what exposure of the mischief of the law ; and, above all, with what earnestness and dignity the advocates of freedom were inspired. It was one of the best compensations of this calamity.

But the Nemesis works underneath again. It is a power that makes noonday dark, and draws us on to our undoing ; and its dismal way is to pillory the offender in the moment of his triumph. The hands that put the chain on the slave are in that moment manacled. Who has seen anything like that which is now done ? The words of John Randolph, wiser than he knew, have been ringing ominously in all echoes for thirty years, words spoken in the heat of the Missouri debate. "We do not govern the people of the North by our black slaves, but by their own white slaves. We know what we are doing. We have conquered you once, and we can and will conquer you again. Ay, we will drive you to the wall, and when we have you there once more, we will keep you there and nail you down

like base money." These words resounding ever since from California to Oregon, from Cape Florida to Cape Cod, come down now like the cry of Fate, in the moment when they are fulfilled. By white slaves, by a white slave, are we beaten.[1] Who looked for such ghastly fulfilment, or to see what we see? Hills and Halletts, servile editors by the hundred, we could have spared. But him, our best and proudest, the first man of the North, in the very moment of mounting the throne, irresistibly taking the bit in his mouth and the collar on his neck, and harnessing himself to the chariot of the planters.

The fairest American fame ends in this filthy law. Mr. Webster cannot choose but regret his law. He must learn that those who make fame accuse him with one voice; that those who have no points to carry that are not identical with public morals and generous civilization, that the obscure and private who have no voice and care for none, so long as things go well, but who feel the disgrace of the new legislation creeping like miasma into their homes, and blotting the daylight, — those to whom his name was once dear and honored, as the manly statesman to whom the choicest gifts of Nature had been accorded, disown him: that he who was

their pride in the woods and mountains of New England is now their mortification, — they have torn down his picture from the wall, they have thrust his speeches into the chimney. No roars of New York mobs can drown this voice in Mr. Webster's ear. It will outwhisper all the salvos of the "Union Committees'" cannon. But I have said too much on this painful topic. I will not pursue that bitter history.[1]

But passing from the ethical to the political view, I wish to place this statute, and we must use the introducer and substantial author of the bill as an illustration of the history. I have as much charity for Mr. Webster, I think, as any one has. I need not say how much I have enjoyed his fame. Who has not helped to praise him? Simply he was the one eminent American of our time, whom we could produce as a finished work of Nature. We delighted in his form and face, in his voice, in his eloquence, in his power of labor, in his concentration, in his large understanding, in his daylight statement, simple force; the facts lay like the strata of a cloud, or like the layers of the crust of the globe. He saw things as they were, and he stated them so. He has been by his clear perceptions and statements in all these years

the best head in Congress, and the champion of the interests of the Northern seaboard: but as the activity and growth of slavery began to be offensively felt by his constituents, the senator became less sensitive to these evils. They were not for him to deal with: he was the commercial representative. He indulged occasionally in excellent expression of the known feeling of the New England people: but, when expected and when pledged, he omitted to speak, and he omitted to throw himself into the movement in those critical moments when his leadership would have turned the scale. At last, at a fatal hour, this sluggishness accumulated to downright counteraction, and, very unexpectedly to the whole Union, on the 7th March, 1850, in opposition to his education, association, and to all his own most explicit language for thirty years, he crossed the line, and became the head of the slavery party in this country.

Mr. Webster perhaps is only following the laws of his blood and constitution. I suppose his pledges were not quite natural to him. Mr. Webster is a man who lives by his memory, a man of the past, not a man of faith or of hope. He obeys his powerful animal nature; — and his finely developed understanding only works

truly and with all its force, when it stands for animal good; that is, for property. He believes, in so many words, that government exists for the protection of property. He looks at the Union as an estate, a large farm, and is excellent in the completeness of his defence of it so far. He adheres to the letter. Happily he was born late, — after the independence had been declared, the Union agreed to, and the constitution settled. What he finds already written, he will defend. Lucky that so much had got well written when he came. For he has no faith in the power of self-government; none whatever in extemporizing a government. Not the smallest municipal provision, if it were new, would receive his sanction. In Massachusetts, in 1776, he would, beyond all question, have been a refugee. He praises Adams and Jefferson, but it is a past Adams and Jefferson that his mind can entertain.' A present Adams and Jefferson he would denounce. So with the eulogies of liberty in his writings, — they are sentimentalism and youthful rhetoric. He can celebrate it, but it means as much from him as from Metternich or Talleyrand. This is all inevitable from his constitution. All the drops of his blood have eyes that look downward. It is neither praise

nor blame to say that he has no moral perception, no moral sentiment, but in that region — to use the phrase of the phrenologists — a hole in the head. The scraps of morality to be gleaned from his speeches are reflections of the mind of others; he says what he hears said, but often makes signal blunders in their use. In Mr. Webster's imagination the American Union was a huge Prince Rupert's drop, which, if so much as the smallest end be shivered off, the whole will snap into atoms. Now the fact is quite different from this. The people are loyal, law-loving, law-abiding. They prefer order, and have no taste for misrule and uproar.

The destiny of this country is great and liberal, and is to be greatly administered. It is to be administered according to what is, and is to be, and not according to what is dead and gone. The union of this people is a real thing, an alliance of men of one flock, one language, one religion, one system of manners and ideas. I hold it to be a real and not a statute union. The people cleave to the Union, because they see their advantage in it, the added power of each.

I suppose the Union can be left to take care of itself. As much real union as there is, the

statutes will be sure to express; as much disunion as there is, no statute can long conceal. Under the Union I suppose the fact to be that there are really two nations, the North and the South. It is not slavery that severs them, it is climate and temperament. The South does not like the North, slavery or no slavery, and never did. The North likes the South well enough, for it knows its own advantages. I am willing to leave them to the facts. If they continue to have a binding interest, they will be pretty sure to find it out: if not, they will consult their peace in parting. But one thing appears certain to me, that, as soon as the constitution ordains an immoral law, it ordains disunion. The law is suicidal, and cannot be obeyed. The Union is at an end as soon as an immoral law is enacted. And he who writes a crime into the statute-book digs under the foundations of the Capitol to plant there a powder-magazine, and lays a train.

I pass to say a few words to the question, What shall we do?

1. What in our federal capacity is our relation to the nation?

2. And what as citizens of a state?

I am an Unionist as we all are, or nearly all,

and I strongly share the hope of mankind in the power, and therefore, in the duties of the Union; and I conceive it demonstrated, — the necessity of common sense and justice entering into the laws. What shall we do? First, abrogate this law; then, proceed to confine slavery to slave states, and help them effectually to make an end of it. Or shall we, as we are advised on all hands, lie by, and wait the progress of the census? But will Slavery lie by? I fear not. She is very industrious, gives herself no holidays. No proclamations will put her down. She got Texas and now will have Cuba, and means to keep her majority. The experience of the past gives us no encouragement to lie by. Shall we call a new Convention, or will any expert statesman furnish us a plan for the summary or gradual winding up of slavery, so far as the Republic is its patron? Where is the South itself? Since it is agreed by all sane men of all parties (or was yesterday) that slavery is mischievous, why does the South itself never offer the smallest counsel of her own? I have never heard in twenty years any project except Mr. Clay's. Let us hear any project with candor and respect. Is it impossible to speak of it with reason and good nature? It is really

the project fit for this country to entertain and accomplish. Everything invites emancipation. The grandeur of the design, the vast stake we hold; the national domain, the new importance of Liberia; the manifest interest of the slave states; the religious effort of the free states; the public opinion of the world; — all join to demand it.

We shall one day bring the States shoulder to shoulder and the citizens man to man to exterminate slavery. Why in the name of common sense and the peace of mankind is not this made the subject of instant negotiation and settlement? Why not end this dangerous dispute on some ground of fair compensation on one side, and satisfaction on the other to the conscience of the free states? It is really the great task fit for this country to accomplish, to buy that property of the planters, as the British nation bought the West Indian slaves. I say buy, — never conceding the right of the planter to own, but that we may acknowledge the calamity of his position, and bear a countryman's share in relieving him; and because it is the only practicable course, and is innocent. Here is a right social or public function, which one man cannot do, which all men must do. 'Tis

said it will cost two thousand millions of dollars. Was there ever any contribution that was so enthusiastically paid as this will be? We will have a chimney-tax. We will give up our coaches, and wine, and watches. The churches will melt their plate. The father of his country shall wait, well pleased, a little longer for his monument; Franklin for his, the Pilgrim Fathers for theirs, and the patient Columbus for his. The mechanics will give, the needle-women will give; the children will have cent-societies. Every man in the land will give a week's work to dig away this accursed mountain of sorrow once and forever out of the world.[1]

Nothing is impracticable to this nation, which it shall set itself to do. Were ever men so endowed, so placed, so weaponed? Their power of territory seconded by a genius equal to every work. By new arts the earth is subdued, roaded, tunnelled, telegraphed, gas-lighted; vast amounts of old labor disused; the sinews of man being relieved by sinews of steam. We are on the brink of more wonders. The sun paints; presently we shall organize the echo, as now we do the shadow. Chemistry is extorting new aids. The genius of this people, it is found, can do anything which can be done by men. These

thirty nations are equal to any work, and are every moment stronger. In twenty-five years they will be fifty millions. Is it not time to do something besides ditching and draining, and making the earth mellow and friable? Let them confront this mountain of poison, — bore, blast, excavate, pulverize, and shovel it once for all, down into the bottomless Pit. A thousand millions were cheap.

But grant that the heart of financiers, accustomed to practical figures, shrinks within them at these colossal amounts, and the embarrassments which complicate the problem; granting that these contingencies are too many to be spanned by any human geometry, and that these evils are to be relieved only by the wisdom of God working in ages, — and by what instrument, whether Liberia, whether flax-cotton, whether the working out this race by Irish and Germans, none can tell, or by what sources God has guarded his law; still the question recurs, What must we do? One thing is plain, we cannot answer for the Union, but we must keep Massachusetts true. It is of unspeakable importance that she play her honest part. She must follow no vicious examples. Massachusetts is a little state: countries have been great by

ideas. Europe is little compared with Asia and Africa; yet Asia and Africa are its ox and its ass. Europe, the least of all the continents, has almost monopolized for twenty centuries the genius and power of them all. Greece was the least part of Europe. Attica a little part of that, — one tenth of the size of Massachusetts. Yet that district still rules the intellect of men. Judæa was a petty country. Yet these two, Greece and Judæa, furnish the mind and the heart by which the rest of the world is sustained; and Massachusetts is little, but, if true to itself, can be the brain which turns about the behemoth.

I say Massachusetts, but I mean Massachusetts in all the quarters of her dispersion; Massachusetts, as she is the mother of all the New England states, and as she sees her progeny scattered over the face of the land, in the farthest South, and the uttermost West. The immense power of rectitude is apt to be forgotten in politics. But they who have brought the great wrong on the country have not forgotten it. They avail themselves of the known probity and honor of Massachusetts, to endorse the statute. The ancient maxim still holds that never was any injustice effected except by the

help of justice. The great game of the government has been to win the sanction of Massachusetts to the crime. Hitherto they have succeeded only so far as to win Boston to a certain extent. The behavior of Boston was the reverse of what it should have been: it was supple and officious, and it put itself into the base attitude of pander to the crime. It should have placed obstruction at every step. Let the attitude of the states be firm. Let us respect the Union to all honest ends. But also respect an older and wider union, the law of Nature and rectitude. Massachusetts is as strong as the Universe, when it does that. We will never intermeddle with your slavery, — but you can in no wise be suffered to bring it to Cape Cod and Berkshire. This law must be made inoperative. It must be abrogated and wiped out of the statute-book; but whilst it stands there, it must be disobeyed. We must make a small state great, by making every man in it true. It was the praise of Athens, "She could not lead countless armies into the field, but she knew how with a little band to defeat those who could." Every Roman reckoned himself at least a match for a Province. Every Dorian did. Every Englishman in Australia, in South

Africa, in India, or in whatever barbarous country their forts and factories have been set up, — represents London, represents the art, power and law of Europe. Every man educated at the Northern school carries the like advantages into the South. For it is confounding distinctions to speak of the geographic sections of this country as of equal civilization. Every nation and every man bows, in spite of himself, to a higher mental and moral existence; and the sting of the late disgraces is that this royal position of Massachusetts was foully lost, that the well-known sentiment of her people was not expressed. Let us correct this error. In this one fastness let truth be spoken and right done. Here let there be no confusion in our ideas. Let us not lie, not steal, nor help to steal, and let us not call stealing by any fine name, such as "Union" or "Patriotism." Let us know that not by the public, but by ourselves, our safety must be bought. That is the secret of Southern power, that they rest not on meetings, but on private heats and courages.

It is very certain from the perfect guaranties in the constitution, and the high arguments of the defenders of liberty, which the occasion called out, that there is sufficient margin in the

statute and the law for the spirit of the Magistrate to show itself, and one, two, three occasions have just now occurred, and past, in either of which, if one man had felt the spirit of Coke or Mansfield or Parsons, and read the law with the eye of freedom, the dishonor of Massachusetts had been prevented, and a limit set to these encroachments forever.

VII

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

LECTURE READ IN THE TABERNACLE, NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 7, 1854, ON THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF DANIEL WEBSTER'S SPEECH IN FAVOR OF THE BILL

"Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains, —
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled:
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!"

Whittier, *Ichabod*.

"We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakspeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us, — they watch from their
graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
— He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!"

Browning, *The Lost Leader.*

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

I DO not often speak to public questions; — they are odious and hurtful, and it seems like meddling or leaving your work. I have my own spirits in prison; — spirits in deeper prisons, whom no man visits if I do not. And then I see what havoc it makes with any good mind, a dissipated philanthropy. The one thing not to be forgiven to intellectual persons is, not to know their own task, or to take their ideas from others. From this want of manly rest in their own and rash acceptance of other people's watchwords come the imbecility and fatigue of their conversation. For they cannot affirm these from any original experience, and of course not with the natural movement and total strength of their nature and talent, but only from their memory, only from their cramped position of standing for their teacher. They say what they would have you believe, but what they do not quite know.[1]

My own habitual view is to the well-being of students or scholars. And it is only when the public event affects them, that it very seriously touches me. And what I have to say is to

them. For every man speaks mainly to a class whom he works with and more or less fully represents. It is to these I am beforehand related and engaged, in this audience or out of it — to them and not to others. And yet, when I say the class of scholars or students, — that is a class which comprises in some sort all mankind, comprises every man in the best hours of his life; and in these days not only virtually but actually. For who are the readers and thinkers of 1854? Owing to the silent revolution which the newspaper has wrought, this class has come in this country to take in all classes. Look into the morning trains which, from every suburb, carry the business men into the city to their shops, counting-rooms, work-yards and warehouses. With them enters the car — the newsboy, that humble priest of politics, finance, philosophy, and religion. He unfolds his magical sheets, — twopence a head his bread of knowledge costs — and instantly the entire rectangular assembly, fresh from their breakfast, are bending as one man to their second breakfast. There is, no doubt, chaff enough in what he brings; but there is fact, thought, and wisdom in the crude mass, from all regions of the world.

I have lived all my life without suffering any known inconvenience from American Slavery. I never saw it; I never heard the whip;[1] I never felt the check on my free speech and action, until, the other day, when Mr. Webster, by his personal influence, brought the Fugitive Slave Law on the country. I say Mr. Webster, for though the Bill was not his, it is yet notorious that he was the life and soul of it, that he gave it all he had: it cost him his life, and under the shadow of his great name inferior men sheltered themselves, threw their ballots for it and made the law. I say inferior men. There were all sorts of what are called brilliant men, accomplished men, men of high station, a President of the United States, Senators, men of eloquent speech, but men without self-respect, without character, and it was strange to see that office, age, fame, talent, even a repute for honesty, all count for nothing. They had no opinions, they had no memory for what they had been saying like the Lord's Prayer all their lifetime: they were only looking to what their great Captain did: if he jumped, they jumped, if he stood on his head, they did. In ordinary, the supposed sense of their district and State is their guide, and that holds them to the part of

liberty and justice. But it is always a little difficult to decipher what this public sense is; and when a great man comes who knots up into himself the opinions and wishes of the people, it is so much easier to follow him as an exponent of this. He too is responsible; they will not be. It will always suffice to say, — "I followed him."

I saw plainly that the great show their legitimate power in nothing more than in their power to misguide us. I saw that a great man, deservedly admired for his powers and their general right direction, was able, — fault of the total want of stamina in public men, — when he failed, to break them all with him, to carry parties with him.

In what I have to say of Mr. Webster I do not confound him with vulgar politicians before or since. There is always base ambition enough, men who calculate on the immense ignorance of the masses; that is their quarry and farm: they use the constituencies at home only for their shoes. And, of course, they can drive out from the contest any honorable man. The low can best win the low, and all men like to be made much of. There are those too who have power and inspiration only to do ill. Their talent or

their faculty deserts them when they undertake anything right. Mr. Webster had a natural ascendancy of aspect and carriage which distinguished him over all his contemporaries. His countenance, his figure, and his manners were all in so grand a style, that he was, without effort, as superior to his most eminent rivals as they were to the humblest; so that his arrival in any place was an event which drew crowds of people, who went to satisfy their eyes, and could not see him enough. I think they looked at him as the representative of the American Continent. He was there in his Adamitic capacity, as if he alone of all men did not disappoint the eye and the ear, but was a fit figure in the landscape.[1]

I remember his appearance at Bunker's Hill. There was the Monument, and here was Webster. He knew well that a little more or less of rhetoric signified nothing: he was only to say plain and equal things, — grand things if he had them, and, if he had them not, only to abstain from saying unfit things, — and the whole occasion was answered by his presence. It was a place for behavior more than for speech, and Mr. Webster walked through his part with entire success. His excellent organization, the

perfection of his elocution and all that thereto belongs, — voice, accent, intonation, attitude, manner, — we shall not soon find again. Then he was so thoroughly simple and wise in his rhetoric; he saw through his matter, hugged his fact so close, went to the principle or essential, and never indulged in a weak flourish, though he knew perfectly well how to make such exordiums, episodes and perorations as might give perspective to his harangues without in the least embarrassing his march or confounding his transitions. In his statement things lay in daylight; we saw them in order as they were. Though he knew very well how to present his own personal claims, yet in his argument he was intellectual, — stated his fact pure of all personality, so that his splendid wrath, when his eyes became lamps, was the wrath of the fact and the cause he stood for.

His power, like that of all great masters, was not in excellent parts, but was total. He had a great and everywhere equal propriety. He worked with that closeness of adhesion to the matter in hand which a joiner or a chemist uses, and the same quiet and sure feeling of right to his place that an oak or a mountain have to theirs. After all his talents have been described,

there remains that perfect propriety which animated all the details of the action or speech with the character of the whole, so that his beauties of detail are endless. He seemed born for the bar, born for the senate, and took very naturally a leading part in large private and in public affairs; for his head distributed things in their right places, and what he saw so well he compelled other people to see also. Great is the privilege of eloquence. What gratitude does every man feel to him who speaks well for the right, — who translates truth into language entirely plain and clear!

The history of this country has given a disastrous importance to the defects of this great man's mind. Whether evil influences and the corruption of politics, or whether original infirmity, it was the misfortune of his country that with this large understanding he had not what is better than intellect, and the source of its health. It is a law of our nature that great thoughts come from the heart. If his moral sensibility had been proportioned to the force of his understanding, what limits could have been set to his genius and beneficent power? But he wanted that deep source of inspiration. Hence a sterility of thought, the want of gen-

eralization in his speeches, and the curious fact that, with a general ability which impresses all the world, there is not a single general remark, not an observation on life and manners, not an aphorism that can pass into literature from his writings.

Four years ago to-night, on one of those high critical moments in history when great issues are determined, when the powers of right and wrong are mustered for conflict, and it lies with one man to give a casting vote, — Mr. Webster, most unexpectedly, threw his whole weight on the side of Slavery, and caused by his personal and official authority the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill.

It is remarked of the Americans that they value dexterity too much, and honor too little; that they think they praise a man more by saying that he is "smart" than by saying that he is right. Whether the defect be national or not, it is the defect and calamity of Mr. Webster; and it is so far true of his countrymen, namely, that the appeal is sure to be made to his physical and mental ability when his character is assailed. His speeches on the seventh of March, and at Albany, at Buffalo, at Syracuse and Boston are cited in justification. And Mr.

Webster's literary editor believes that it was his wish to rest his fame on the speech of the seventh of March. Now, though I have my own opinions on this seventh of March discourse and those others, and think them very transparent and very open to criticism, — yet the secondary merits of a speech, namely, its logic, its illustrations, its points, etc., are not here in question. Nobody doubts that Daniel Webster could make a good speech. Nobody doubts that there were good and plausible things to be said on the part of the South. But this is not a question of ingenuity, not a question of syllogisms, but of sides. *How came he there?*[1]

There are always texts and thoughts and arguments. But it is the genius and temper of the man which decides whether he will stand for right or for might. Who doubts the power of any fluent debater to defend either of our political parties, or any client in our courts? There was the same law in England for Jeffries and Talbot and Yorke to read slavery out of, and for Lord Mansfield to read freedom. And in this country one sees that there is always margin enough in the statute for a liberal judge to read one way and a servile judge another.

But the question which History will ask is

broader. In the final hour, when he was forced by the peremptory necessity of the closing armies to take a side, — did he take the part of great principles, the side of humanity and justice, or the side of abuse and oppression and chaos?

Mr. Webster decided for Slavery, and that, when the aspect of the institution was no longer doubtful, no longer feeble and apologetic and proposing soon to end itself, but when it was strong, aggressive, and threatening an illimitable increase. He listened to State reasons and hopes, and left, with much complacency we are told, the testament of his speech to the astonished State of Massachusetts, *vera pro gratis;* a ghastly result of all those years of experience in affairs, this, that there was nothing better for the foremost American man to tell his countrymen than that Slavery was now at that strength that they must beat down their conscience and become kidnappers for it.

This was like the doleful speech falsely ascribed to the patriot Brutus: "Virtue, I have followed thee through life, and I find thee but a shadow." [1] Here was a question of an immoral law; a question agitated for ages, and settled always in the same way by every great jurist, that

an immoral law cannot be valid. Cicero, Grotius, Coke, Blackstone, Burlamaqui, Vattel, Burke, Jefferson, do all affirm this, and I cite them, not that they can give evidence to what is indisputable, but because, though lawyers and practical statesmen, the habit of their profession did not hide from them that this truth was the foundation of States.

Here was the question, Are you for man and for the good of man ; or are you for the hurt and harm of man ? It was the question whether man shall be treated as leather ? whether the Negro shall be, as the Indians were in Spanish America, a piece of money ? Whether this system, which is a kind of mill or factory for converting men into monkeys, shall be upheld and enlarged ? And Mr. Webster and the country went for the application to these poor men of quadruped law.

People were expecting a totally different course from Mr. Webster. If any man had in that hour possessed the weight with the country which he had acquired, he could have brought the whole country to its senses. But not a moment's pause was allowed. Angry parties went from bad to worse, and the decision of Webster was accompanied with everything offensive to freedom and good morals. There was something like an

attempt to debauch the moral sentiment of the clergy and of the youth. Burke said he "would pardon something to the spirit of liberty." But by Mr. Webster the opposition to the law was sharply called treason, and prosecuted so. He told the people at Boston "they must conquer their prejudices;" that "agitation of the subject of Slavery must be suppressed." He did as immoral men usually do, made very low bows to the Christian Church, and went through all the Sunday decorums; but when allusion was made to the question of duty and the sanctions of morality, he very frankly said, at Albany, "Some higher law, something existing somewhere between here and the third heaven, — I do not know where." And if the reporters say true, this wretched atheism found some laughter in the company.

I said I had never in my life up to this time suffered from the Slave Institution. Slavery in Virginia or Carolina was like Slavery in Africa or the Feejees, for me. There was an old fugitive law, but it had become, or was fast becoming, a dead letter, and, by the genius and laws of Massachusetts, inoperative. The new Bill made it operative, required me to hunt slaves, and it found citizens in Massachusetts willing to act

as judges and captors. Moreover, it discloses the secret of the new times, that Slavery was no longer mendicant, but was become aggressive and dangerous.

The way in which the country was dragged to consent to this, and the disastrous defection (on the miserable cry of Union) of the men of letters, of the colleges, of educated men, nay, of some preachers of religion, — was the darkest passage in the history. It showed that our prosperity had hurt us, and that we could not be shocked by crime. It showed that the old religion and the sense of the right had faded and gone out; that while we reckoned ourselves a highly cultivated nation, our bellies had run away with our brains, and the principles of culture and progress did not exist.

For I suppose that liberty is an accurate index, in men and nations, of general progress. The theory of personal liberty must always appeal to the most refined communities and to the men of the rarest perception and of delicate moral sense. For there are rights which rest on the finest sense of justice, and, with every degree of civility, it will be more truly felt and defined. A barbarous tribe of good stock will, by means of their best heads, secure substantial liberty.

But where there is any weakness in a race, and it becomes in a degree matter of concession and protection from their stronger neighbors, the incompatibility and offensiveness of the wrong will of course be most evident to the most cultivated. For it is, — is it not? — the essence of courtesy, of politeness, of religion, of love, to prefer another, to postpone oneself, to protect another from oneself. That is the distinction of the gentleman, to defend the weak and redress the injured, as it is of the savage and the brutal to usurp and use others.

In Massachusetts, as we all know, there has always existed a predominant conservative spirit. We have more money and value of every kind than other people, and wish to keep them. The plea on which freedom was resisted was Union. I went to certain serious men, who had a little more reason than the rest, and inquired why they took this part? They answered that they had no confidence in their strength to resist the Democratic party; that they saw plainly that all was going to the utmost verge of licence; each was vying with his neighbor to lead the party, by proposing the worst measure, and they threw themselves on the extreme conservatism, as a drag on the wheel: that they knew Cuba would

be had, and Mexico would be had, and they stood stiffly on conservatism, and as near to monarchy as they could, only to moderate the velocity with which the car was running down the precipice. In short, their theory was despair; the Whig wisdom was only reprieve, a waiting to be last devoured. They side with Carolina, or with Arkansas, only to make a show of Whig strength, wherewith to resist a little longer this general ruin.

I have a respect for conservatism. I know how deeply founded it is in our nature, and how idle are all attempts to shake ourselves free from it. We are all conservatives, half Whig, half Democrat, in our essences: and might as well try to jump out of our skins as to escape from our Whiggery. There are two forces in Nature, by whose antagonism we exist; the power of Fate, Fortune, the laws of the world, the order of things, or however else we choose to phrase it, the material necessities, on the one hand, — and Will or Duty or Freedom on the other.

May and Must, and the sense of right and duty, on the one hand, and the material necessities on the other: May and Must. In vulgar politics the Whig goes for what has been, for the old necessities, — the Musts. The reformer

goes for the Better, for the ideal good, for the Mays. But each of these parties must of necessity take in, in some measure, the principles of the other. Each wishes to cover the whole ground; to hold fast *and* to advance. Only, one lays the emphasis on keeping, and the other on advancing. I too think the *musts* are a safe company to follow, and even agreeable. But if we are Whigs, let us be Whigs of nature and science, and so for all the necessities. Let us know that, over and above all the *musts* of poverty and appetite, is the instinct of man to rise, and the instinct to love and help his brother.

Now, Gentlemen, I think we have in this hour instruction again in the simplest lesson. Events roll, millions of men are engaged, and the result is the enforcing of some of those first commandments which we heard in the nursery. We never get beyond our first lesson, for, really, the world exists, as I understand it, to teach the science of liberty, which begins with liberty from fear.

The events of this month are teaching one thing plain and clear, the worthlessness of good tools to bad workmen; that official papers are of no use; resolutions of public meetings, platforms of conventions, no, nor laws, nor constitu-

tions, any more. These are all declaratory of the will of the moment, and are passed with more levity and on grounds far less honorable than ordinary business transactions of the street.

You relied on the constitution. It has not the word *slave* in it; and very good argument has shown that it would not warrant the crimes that are done under it; that, with provisions so vague for an object not named, and which could not be availed of to claim a barrel of sugar or a barrel of corn, the robbing of a man and of all his posterity is effected. You relied on the Supreme Court. The law was right, excellent law for the lambs. But what if unhappily the judges were chosen from the wolves, and give to all the law a wolfish interpretation? You relied on the Missouri Compromise. That is ridden over. You relied on State sovereignty in the Free States to protect their citizens. They are driven with contempt out of the courts and out of the territory of the Slave States, — if they are so happy as to get out with their lives,' — and now you relied on these dismal guaranties infamously made in 1850; and, before the body of Webster is yet crumbled, it is found that they have crumbled. This eternal monument of his fame and of the Union is

rotten in four years. They are no guaranty to the free states. They are a guaranty to the slave states that, as they have hitherto met with no repulse, they shall meet with none.

I fear there is no reliance to be put on any kind or form of covenant, no, not on sacred forms, none on churches, none on bibles. For one would have said that a Christian would not keep slaves; — but the Christians keep slaves. Of course they will not dare to read the Bible? Won't they? They quote the Bible, quote Paul, quote Christ, to justify slavery. If slavery is good, then is lying, theft, arson, homicide, each and all good, and to be maintained by Union societies.

These things show that no forms, neither constitutions, nor laws, nor covenants, nor churches, nor bibles, are of any use in themselves. The Devil nestles comfortably into them all. There is no help but in the head and heart and hamstrings of a man. Covenants are of no use without honest men to keep them; laws of none but with loyal citizens to obey them. To interpret Christ it needs Christ in the heart. The teachings of the Spirit can be apprehended only by the same spirit that gave them forth. To make good the cause of Freedom, you

must draw off from all foolish trust in others. You must be citadels and warriors yourselves, declarations of Independence, the charter, the battle and the victory. Cromwell said, "We can only resist the superior training of the King's soldiers, by enlisting godly men." And no man has a right to hope that the laws of New York will defend him from the contamination of slaves another day until he has made up his mind that he will not owe his protection to the laws of New York, but to his own sense and spirit. Then he protects New York. He only who is able to stand alone is qualified for society. And that I understand to be the end for which a soul exists in this world, — to be himself the counterbalance of all falsehood and all wrong. "The army of unright is encamped from pole to pole, but the road of victory is known to the just." Everything may be taken away; he may be poor, he may be houseless, yet he will know out of his arms to make a pillow, and out of his breast a bolster. Why have the minority no influence? Because they have not a real minority of one.[1]

I conceive that thus to detach a man and make him feel that he is to owe all to himself, is the way to make him strong and rich; and

here the optimist must find, if anywhere, the benefit of Slavery. We have many teachers; we are in this world for culture, to be instructed in realities, in the laws of moral and intelligent nature; and our education is not conducted by toys and luxuries, but by austere and rugged masters, by poverty, solitude, passions, War, Slavery; to know that Paradise is under the shadow of swords;[1] that divine sentiments which are always soliciting us are breathed into us from on high, and are an offset to a Universe of suffering and crime; that self-reliance, the height and perfection of man, is reliance on God.[2] The insight of the religious sentiment will disclose to him unexpected aids in the nature of things. The Persian Saadi said, "Beware of hurting the orphan. When the orphan sets a-crying, the throne of the Almighty is rocked from side to side."

Whenever a man has come to this mind, that there is no Church for him but his believing prayer; no Constitution but his dealing well and justly with his neighbor; no liberty but his invincible will to do right, — then certain aids and allies will promptly appear: for the constitution of the Universe is on his side. It is of no use to vote down gravitation of morals.

What is useful will last, whilst that which is hurtful to the world will sink beneath all the opposing forces which it must exasperate. The terror which the Marseillaise struck into oppression, it thunders again to-day, —

"Tout est soldat pour vous combattre."

Everything turns soldier to fight you down. The end for which man was made is not crime in any form, and a man cannot steal without incurring the penalties of the thief, though all the legislatures vote that it is virtuous, and though there be a general conspiracy among scholars and official persons to hold him up, and to say, "*Nothing is good but stealing.*" A man who commits a crime defeats the end of his existence. He was created for benefit, and he exists for harm; and as well-doing makes power and wisdom, ill-doing takes them away. A man who steals another man's labor steals away his own faculties; his integrity, his humanity is flowing away from him. The habit of oppression cuts out the moral eyes, and, though the intellect goes on simulating the moral as before, its sanity is gradually destroyed. It takes away the presentiments.

I suppose in general this is allowed, that if

you have a nice question of right and wrong, you would not go with it to Louis Napoleon, or to a political hack, or to a slave-driver. The habit of mind of traders in power would not be esteemed favorable to delicate moral perception. American slavery affords no exception to this rule. No excess of good nature or of tenderness in individuals has been able to give a new character to the system, to tear down the whipping-house. The plea in the mouth of a slaveholder that the negro is an inferior race sounds very oddly in my ear. "The masters of slaves seem generally anxious to prove that they are not of a race superior in any noble quality to the meanest of their bondmen." And indeed when the Southerner points to the anatomy of the negro, and talks of chimpanzee, — I recall Montesquieu's remark, "It will not do to say that negroes are men, lest it should turn out that whites are not."

Slavery is disheartening; but Nature is not so helpless but it can rid itself at last of every wrong.[1] But the spasms of Nature are centuries and ages, and will tax the faith of short-lived men. Slowly, slowly the Avenger comes, but comes surely. The proverbs of the nations affirm these delays, but affirm the arrival. They

say, "God may consent, but not forever." The delay of the Divine Justice — this was the meaning and soul of the Greek Tragedy; this the soul of their religion. "There has come, too, one to whom lurking warfare is dear, Retribution, with a soul full of wiles; a violator of hospitality; guileful without the guilt of guile; limping, late in her arrival." They said of the happiness of the unjust, that "at its close it begets itself an offspring and does not die childless, and instead of good fortune, there sprouts forth for posterity ever-ravening calamity:" —

> "For evil word shall evil word be said,
> For murder-stroke a murder-stroke be paid.
> Who smites must smart."

These delays, you see them now in the temper of the times. The national spirit in this country is so drowsy, preoccupied with interest, deaf to principle. The Anglo-Saxon race is proud and strong and selfish. They believe only in Anglo-Saxons. In 1825 Greece found America deaf, Poland found America deaf, Italy and Hungary found her deaf. England maintains trade, not liberty; stands against Greece · against Hungary; against Schleswig-Holstein; against the French Republic whilst it was a republic.

To faint hearts the times offer no invitation, and torpor exists here throughout the active classes on the subject of domestic slavery and its appalling aggressions. Yes, that is the stern edict of Providence, that liberty shall be no hasty fruit, but that event on event, population on population, age on age, shall cast itself into the opposite scale, and not until liberty has slowly accumulated weight enough to counter-vail and preponderate against all this, can the sufficient recoil come. All the great cities, all the refined circles, all the statesmen, Guizot, Palmerston, Webster, Calhoun, are sure to be found befriending liberty with their words, and crushing it with their votes. Liberty is never cheap. It is made difficult, because freedom is the accomplishment and perfectness of man. He is a finished man; ' earning and bestowing good; equal to the world; at home in Nature and dignifying that; the sun does not see anything nobler, and has nothing to teach him. Therefore mountains of difficulty must be surmounted, stern trials met, wiles of seduction, dangers, healed by a quarantine of calamities to measure his strength before he dare say, I am free.

Whilst the inconsistency of slavery with the principles on which the world is built guarantees

its downfall, I own that the patience it requires is almost too sublime for mortals, and seems to demand of us more than mere hoping. And when one sees how fast the rot spreads, — it is growing serious, — I think we demand of superior men that they be superior in this, — that the mind and the virtue shall give their verdict in their day, and accelerate so far the progress of civilization. Possession is sure to throw its stupid strength for existing power, and appetite and ambition will go for that. Let the aid of virtue, intelligence and education be cast where they rightfully belong. They are organically ours. Let them be loyal to their own. I wish to see the instructed class here know their own flag, and not fire on their comrades. We should not forgive the clergy for taking on every issue the immoral side; nor the Bench, if it put itself on the side of the culprit; nor the Government, if it sustain the mob against the laws.'

It is a potent support and ally to a brave man standing single, or with a few, for the right, and out-voted and ostracized, to know that better men in other parts of the country appreciate the service and will rightly report him to his own and the next age. Without this assurance, he will sooner sink. He may well say, 'If my

countrymen do not care to be defended, I too will decline the controversy, from which I only reap invectives and hatred.' Yet the lovers of liberty may with reason tax the coldness and indifferentism of scholars and literary men. They are lovers of liberty in Greece and Rome and in the English Commonwealth, but they are lukewarm lovers of the liberty of America in 1854. The universities are not, as in Hobbes's time, "the core of rebellion," no, but the seat of inertness. They have forgotten their allegiance to the Muse, and grown worldly and political. I listened, lately, on one of those occasions when the university chooses one of its distinguished sons returning from the political arena, believing that senators and statesmen would be glad to throw off the harness and to dip again in the Castalian pools. But if audiences forget themselves, statesmen do not. The low bows to all the crockery gods of the day were duly made: — only in one part of the discourse the orator allowed to transpire, rather against his will, a little sober sense.[1] It was this: 'I am, as you see, a man virtuously inclined, and only corrupted by my profession of politics. I should prefer the right side. You, gentlemen of these literary and scientific schools, and the important class

you represent, have the power to make your verdict clear and prevailing. Had you done so, you would have found me its glad organ and champion. Abstractly, I should have preferred that side. But you have not done it. You have not spoken out. You have failed to arm me. I can only deal with masses as I find them. Abstractions are not for me. I go then for such parties and opinions as have provided me with a working apparatus. I give you my word, not without regret, that I was first for you ; and though I am now to deny and condemn you, you see it is not my will but the party necessity.' Having made this manifesto and professed his adoration for liberty in the time of his grandfathers, he proceeded with his work of denouncing freedom and freemen at the present day, much in the tone and spirit in which Lord Bacon prosecuted his benefactor Essex. He denounced every name and aspect under which liberty and progress dare show themselves in this age and country, but with a lingering conscience which qualified each sentence with a recommendation to mercy.

But I put it to every noble and generous spirit, to every poetic, every heroic, every religious heart, that not so is our learning, our

education, our poetry, our worship to be declared. Liberty is aggressive, Liberty is the Crusade of all brave and conscientious men, the Epic Poetry, the new religion, the chivalry of all gentlemen. This is the oppressed Lady whom true knights on their oath and honor must rescue and save.

Now at last we are disenchanted and shall have no more false hopes. I respect the Anti-Slavery Society. It is the Cassandra that has foretold all that has befallen, fact for fact, years ago; foretold all, and no man laid it to heart. It seemed, as the Turks say, "Fate makes that a man should not believe his own eyes." But the Fugitive Law did much to unglue the eyes of men, and now the Nebraska Bill leaves us staring. The Anti-Slavery Society will add many members this year. The Whig Party will join it; the Democrats will join it. The population of the free states will join it. I doubt not, at last, the slave states will join it. But be that sooner or later, and whoever comes or stays away, I hope we have reached the end of our unbelief, have come to a belief that there is a divine Providence in the world, which will not save us but through our own coöperation.

VIII

THE ASSAULT UPON MR. SUMNER

SPEECH AT A MEETING OF THE CITIZENS IN
THE TOWN HALL, IN CONCORD,
MAY 26, 1856

His erring foe,
Self-assured that he prevails,
Looks from his victim lying low,
And sees aloft the red right arm
Redress the eternal scales.

THE ASSAULT UPON MR. SUMNER

MR. CHAIRMAN: I sympathize heartily with the spirit of the resolutions. The events of the last few years and months and days have taught us the lessons of centuries. I do not see how a barbarous community and a civilized community can constitute one state. I think we must get rid of slavery, or we must get rid of freedom. Life has not parity of value in the free state and in the slave state. In one, it is adorned with education, with skilful labor, with arts, with long prospective interests, with sacred family ties, with honor and justice. In the other, life is a fever; man is an animal, given to pleasure, frivolous, irritable, spending his days in hunting and practising with deadly weapons to defend himself against his slaves and against his companions brought up in the same idle and dangerous way. Such people live for the moment, they have properly no future, and readily risk on every passion a life which is of small value to themselves or to others. Many years ago, when Mr. Webster was challenged in Washington to a duel by one of these mad-

caps, his friends came forward with prompt good sense and said such a thing was not to be thought of; Mr. Webster's life was the property of his friends and of the whole country, and was not to be risked on the turn of a vagabond's ball. Life and life are incommensurate. The whole state of South Carolina does not now offer one or any number of persons who are to be weighed for a moment in the scale with such a person as the meanest of them all has now struck down. The very conditions of the game must always be, — the worst life staked against the best. It is the best whom they desire to kill. It is only when they cannot answer your reasons, that they wish to knock you down. If, therefore, Massachusetts could send to the Senate a better man than Mr. Sumner, his death would be only so much the more quick and certain. Now, as men's bodily strength, or skill with knives and guns, is not usually in proportion to their knowledge and mother-wit, but oftener in the inverse ratio, it will only do to send foolish persons to Washington, if you wish them to be safe.

The outrage is the more shocking from the singularly pure character of its victim. Mr. Sumner's position is exceptional in its honor.

He had not taken his degrees in the caucus and in hack politics. It is notorious that, in the long time when his election was pending, he refused to take a single step to secure it. He would not so much as go up to the state house to shake hands with this or that person whose good will was reckoned important by his friends. He was elected. It was a homage to character and talent. In Congress, he did not rush into party position. He sat long silent and studious. His friends, I remember, were told that they would find Sumner a man of the world like the rest; 'it is quite impossible to be at Washington and not bend; he will bend as the rest have done.' Well, he did not bend. He took his position and kept it. He meekly bore the cold shoulder from some of his New England colleagues, the hatred of his enemies, the pity of the indifferent, cheered by the love and respect of good men with whom he acted; and has stood for the North, a little in advance of all the North, and therefore without adequate support. He has never faltered in his maintenance of justice and freedom. He has gone beyond the large expectation of his friends in his increasing ability and his manlier tone. I have heard that some of his political friends tax him

with indolence or negligence in refusing to make electioneering speeches, or otherwise to bear his part in the labor which party organization requires. I say it to his honor. But more to his honor are the faults which his enemies lay to his charge. I think, sir, if Mr. Sumner had any vices, we should be likely to hear of them. They have fastened their eyes like microscopes for five years on every act, word, manner and movement, to find a flaw, — and with what result? His opponents accuse him neither of drunkenness nor debauchery, nor job, nor speculation, nor rapacity, nor personal aims of any kind. No; but with what? Why, beyond this charge, which it is impossible was ever sincerely made, that he broke over the proprieties of debate, I find him accused of publishing his opinion of the Nebraska conspiracy in a letter to the people of the United States, with discourtesy. Then, that he is an abolitionist; as if every sane human being were not an abolitionist, or a believer that all men should be free. And the third crime he stands charged with, is, that his speeches were written before they were spoken; which, of course, must be true in Sumner's case, as it was true of Webster, of Adams, of Calhoun, of Burke, of Chatham,

of Demosthenes; of every first-rate speaker that ever lived. It is the high compliment he pays to the intelligence of the Senate and of the country. When the same reproach was cast on the first orator of ancient times by some caviller of his day, he said, "I should be ashamed to come with one unconsidered word before such an assembly." Mr. Chairman, when I think of these most small faults as the worst which party hatred could allege, I think I may borrow the language which Bishop Burnet applied to Sir Isaac Newton, and say that Charles Sumner "has the whitest soul I ever knew."

Well, sir, this noble head, so comely and so wise, must be the target for a pair of bullies to beat with clubs. The murderer's brand shall stamp their foreheads wherever they may wander in the earth. But I wish, sir, that the high respects of this meeting shall be expressed to Mr. Sumner; that a copy of the resolutions that have been read may be forwarded to him. I wish that he may know the shudder of terror which ran through all this community on the first tidings of this brutal attack. Let him hear that every man of worth in New England loves his virtues; that every mother thinks of him as the protector of families; that every friend

of freedom thinks him the friend of freedom. And if our arms at this distance cannot defend him from assassins, we confide the defence of a life so precious to all honorable men and true patriots, and to the Almighty Maker of men.[1]

IX

SPEECH

AT THE KANSAS RELIEF MEETING IN CAMBRIDGE WEDNESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 10, 1856

And ye shall succor men;
'T is nobleness to serve;
Help them who cannot help again:
Beware from right to swerve.

SPEECH
ON AFFAIRS IN KANSAS

I REGRET, with all this company, the absence of Mr. Whitman of Kansas, whose narrative was to constitute the interest of this meeting. Mr. Whitman is not here; but knowing, as we all do, why he is not, what duties kept him at home, he is more than present. His vacant chair speaks for him. For quite other reasons, I had been wiser to have stayed at home, unskilled as I am to address a political meeting, but it is impossible for the most recluse to extricate himself from the questions of the times.

There is this peculiarity about the case of Kansas, that all the right is on one side. We hear the screams of hunted wives and children answered by the howl of the butchers. The testimony of the telegraphs from St. Louis and the border confirm the worst details. The printed letters of border ruffians avow the facts. When pressed to look at the cause of the mischief in the Kansas laws, the President falters and declines the discussion; but his supporters in the Senate, Mr. Cass, Mr. Geyer, Mr.

Hunter, speak out, and declare the intolerable atrocity of the code. It is a maxim that all party spirit produces the incapacity to receive natural impressions from facts; and our recent political history has abundantly borne out the maxim. But these details that have come from Kansas are so horrible, that the hostile press have but one word in reply, namely, that it is all exaggeration, 't is an Abolition lie. Do the Committee of Investigation say that the outrages have been overstated? Does their dismal catalogue of private tragedies show it? Do the private letters? Is it an exaggeration, that Mr. Hopps of Somerville, Mr. Hoyt of Deerfield, Mr. Jennison of Groton, Mr. Phillips of Berkshire, have been murdered? That Mr. Robinson of Fitchburg has been imprisoned? Rev. Mr. Nute of Springfield seized, and up to this time we have no tidings of his fate?

In these calamities under which they suffer, and the worst which threaten them, the people of Kansas ask for bread, clothes, arms and men, to save them alive, and enable them to stand against these enemies of the human race. They have a right to be helped, for they have helped themselves.

This aid must be sent, and this is not to be

doled out as an ordinary charity; but bestowed up to the magnitude of the want, and, as has been elsewhere said, "on the scale of a national action." I think we are to give largely, lavishly, to these men. And we must prepare to do it. We must learn to do with less, live in a smaller tenement, sell our apple-trees, our acres, our pleasant houses. I know people who are making haste to reduce their expenses and pay their debts, not with a view to new accumulations, but in preparation to save and earn for the benefit of the Kansas emigrants.

We must have aid from individuals, — we must also have aid from the state. I know that the last legislature refused that aid. I know that lawyers hesitate on technical grounds, and wonder what method of relief the legislature will apply. But I submit that, in a case like this, where citizens of Massachusetts, legal voters here, have emigrated to national territory under the sanction of every law, and are then set on by highwaymen, driven from their new homes, pillaged, and numbers of them killed and scalped, and the whole world knows that this is no accidental brawl, but a systematic war to the knife, and in defiance of all laws and liberties, — I submit that the governor and

legislature should neither slumber nor sleep till they have found out how to send effectual aid and comfort to these poor farmers, or else should resign their seats to those who can. But first let them hang the halls of the state-house with black crape, and order funeral service to be said for the citizens whom they were unable to defend.

We stick at the technical difficulties. I think there never was a people so choked and stultified by forms. We adore the forms of law, instead of making them vehicles of wisdom and justice. I like the primary assembly. I own I have little esteem for governments. I esteem them only good in the moment when they are established. I set the private man first. He only who is able to stand alone is qualified to be a citizen. Next to the private man, I value the primary assembly, met to watch the government and to correct it. That is the theory of the American State, that it exists to execute the will of the citizens, is always responsible to them, and is always to be changed when it does not. First, the private citizen, then the primary assembly, and the government last.

In this country for the last few years the government has been the chief obstruction to the

common weal. Who doubts that Kansas would have been very well settled, if the United States had let it alone? The government armed and led the ruffians against the poor farmers. I do not know any story so gloomy as the politics of this country for the last twenty years, centralizing ever more manifestly round one spring, and that a vast crime, and ever more plainly, until it is notorious that all promotion, power and policy are dictated from one source, — illustrating the fatal effects of a false position to demoralize legislation and put the best people always at a disadvantage; — one crime always present, always to be varnished over, to find fine names for; and we free statesmen, as accomplices to the guilt, ever in the power of the grand offender.

Language has lost its meaning in the universal cant. *Representative Government* is really misrepresentative; *Union* is a conspiracy against the Northern States which the Northern States are to have the privilege of paying for; the *adding of Cuba and Central America* to the slave marts is *enlarging the area of Freedom. Manifest Destiny*, *Democracy*, *Freedom*, fine names for an ugly thing. They call it otto of rose and lavender, — I call it bilge-water. They call it Chivalry

and Freedom; I call it the stealing all the earnings of a poor man and the earnings of his little girl and boy, and the earnings of all that shall come from him, his children's children forever.

But this is Union, and this is Democracy; and our poor people, led by the nose by these fine words, dance and sing, ring bells and fire cannon, with every new link of the chain which is forged for their limbs by the plotters in the Capitol.

What are the results of law and union? There is no Union. Can any citizen of Massachusetts travel in honor through Kentucky and Alabama and speak his mind? Or can any citizen of the Southern country who happens to think kidnapping a bad thing, say so? Let Mr. Underwood of Virginia answer. Is it to be supposed that there are no men in Carolina who dissent from the popular sentiment now reigning there? It must happen, in the variety of human opinions, that there are dissenters. They are silent as the grave. Are there no women in that country, — women, who always carry the conscience of a people? Yet we have not heard one discordant whisper.

In the free states, we give a snivelling sup-

port to slavery. The judges give cowardly interpretations to the law, in direct opposition to the known foundation of all law, that *every immoral statute is void.* And here of Kansas, the President says: "Let the complainants go to the courts;" though he knows that when the poor plundered farmer comes to the court, he finds the ringleader who has robbed him dismounting from his own horse, and unbuckling his knife to sit as his judge.

The President told the Kansas Committee that the whole difficulty grew from "the factious spirit of the Kansas people respecting institutions which they need not have concerned themselves about." A very remarkable speech from a Democratic President to his fellow citizens, that they are not to concern themselves with institutions which they alone are to create and determine. The President is a lawyer, and should know the statutes of the land. But I borrow the language of an eminent man, used long since, with far less occasion: "If that be law, let the ploughshare be run under the foundations of the Capitol;" — and if that be Government, extirpation is the only cure.

I am glad to see that the terror at disunion and anarchy is disappearing. Massachusetts, in its

heroic day, had no government — was an anarchy. Every man stood on his own feet, was his own governor; and there was no breach of peace from Cape Cod to Mount Hoosac. California, a few years ago, by the testimony of all people at that time in the country, had the best government that ever existed. Pans of gold lay drying outside of every man's tent, in perfect security. The land was measured into little strips of a few feet wide, all side by side. A bit of ground that your hand could cover was worth one or two hundred dollars, on the edge of your strip; and there was no dispute. Every man throughout the country was armed with knife and revolver, and it was known that instant justice would be administered to each offence, and perfect peace reigned. For the Saxon man, when he is well awake, is not a pirate but a citizen, all made of hooks and eyes, and links himself naturally to his brothers, as bees hook themselves to one another and to their queen in a loyal swarm.

But the hour is coming when the strongest will not be strong enough. A harder task will the new revolution of the nineteenth century be than was the revolution of the eighteenth century. I think the American Revolution bought its glory cheap. If the problem was new, it was

simple. If there were few people, they were united, and the enemy three thousand miles off. But now, vast property, gigantic interests, family connections, webs of party, cover the land with a network that immensely multiplies the dangers of war.[1]

Fellow citizens, in these times full of the fate of the Republic, I think the towns should hold town meetings, and resolve themselves into Committees of Safety, go into permanent sessions, adjourning from week to week, from month to month. I wish we could send the sergeant-at-arms to stop every American who is about to leave the country. Send home every one who is abroad, lest they should find no country to return to. Come home and stay at home, while there is a country to save. When it is lost it will be time enough then for any who are luckless enough to remain alive to gather up their clothes and depart to some land where freedom exists.

X

REMARKS

AT A MEETING FOR THE RELIEF OF THE FAMILY OF JOHN BROWN, AT TREMONT TEMPLE, BOSTON NOVEMBER 18, 1859

"John Brown in Kansas settled, like a steadfast Yankee farmer,
Brave and godly, with four sons — all stalwart men of might.
There he spoke aloud for Freedom, and the Border strife grew warmer
Till the Rangers fired his dwelling, in his absence, in the night;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Came homeward in the morning to find his house burned down.

Then he grasped his trusty rifle, and boldly fought for Freedom;
Smote from border unto border the fierce invading band:
And he and his brave boys vowed — so might Heaven help and speed 'em —
They would save those grand old prairies from the curse that blights the land;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Said, 'Boys, the Lord will aid us!' and he shoved his ram rod down."

Edmund Clarence Stedman, *John Brown*.

JOHN BROWN

MR. CHAIRMAN, AND FELLOW CITIZENS: I share the sympathy and sorrow which have brought us together. Gentlemen who have preceded me have well said that no wall of separation could here exist. This commanding event which has brought us together, eclipses all others which have occurred for a long time in our history, and I am very glad to see that this sudden interest in the hero of Harper's Ferry has provoked an extreme curiosity in all parts of the Republic, in regard to the details of his history. Every anecdote is eagerly sought, and I do not wonder that gentlemen find traits of relation readily between him and themselves. One finds a relation in the church, another in the profession, another in the place of his birth. He was happily a representative of the American Republic. Captain John Brown is a farmer, the fifth in descent from Peter Brown, who came to Plymouth in the Mayflower, in 1620. All the six have been farmers. His grandfather, of Simsbury, in Connecticut, was a captain in the Revolution. His father, largely interested as a raiser of stock,

became a contractor to supply the army with beef, in the war of 1812, and our Captain John Brown, then a boy, with his father was present and witnessed the surrender of General Hull. He cherishes a great respect for his father, as a man of strong character, and his respect is probably just. For himself, he is so transparent that all men see him through. He is a man to make friends wherever on earth courage and integrity are esteemed, the rarest of heroes, a pure idealist, with no by-ends of his own. Many of you have seen him, and every one who has heard him speak has been impressed alike by his simple, artless goodness, joined with his sublime courage. He joins that perfect Puritan faith which brought his fifth ancestor to Plymouth Rock with his grandfather's ardor in the Revolution. He believes in two articles, — two instruments, shall I say? — the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence; and he used this expression in conversation here concerning them, "Better that a whole generation of men, women and children should pass away by a violent death than that one word of either should be violated in this country." There is a Unionist, — there is a strict constructionist for you. He believes in the Union of the States, and he conceives

that the only obstruction to the Union is Slavery, and for that reason, as a patriot, he works for its abolition. The governor of Virginia has pronounced his eulogy in a manner that discredits the moderation of our timid parties. His own speeches to the court have interested the nation in him. What magnanimity, and what innocent pleading, as of childhood! You remember his words: "If I had interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or any of their friends, parents, wives or children, it would all have been right. But I believe that to have interfered as I have done, for the despised poor, was not wrong, but right." [1]

It is easy to see what a favorite he will be with history, which plays such pranks with temporary reputations. Nothing can resist the sympathy which all elevated minds must feel with Brown, and through them the whole civilized world; and if he must suffer, he must drag official gentlemen into an immortality most undesirable, of which they have already some disagreeable forebodings. Indeed, it is the *reductio ad absurdum* of Slavery, when the governor of Virginia is forced to hang a man whom he declares to be a man of the most integrity,

truthfulness and courage he has ever met. Is that the kind of man the gallows is built for? It were bold to affirm that there is within that broad commonwealth, at this moment, another citizen as worthy to live, and as deserving of all public and private honor, as this poor prisoner.'

But we are here to think of relief for the family of John Brown. To my eyes, that family looks very large and very needy of relief. It comprises his brave fellow sufferers in the Charlestown Jail; the fugitives still hunted in the mountains of Virginia and Pennsylvania; the sympathizers with him in all the states; and, I may say, almost every man who loves the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence, like him, and who sees what a tiger's thirst threatens him in the malignity of public sentiment in the slave states. It seems to me that a common feeling joins the people of Massachusetts with him.

I said John Brown was an idealist. He believed in his ideas to that extent that he existed to put them all into action; he said 'he did not believe in moral suasion, he believed in putting the thing through.' He saw how deceptive the forms are. We fancy, in Massachusetts, that we are free; yet it seems the government is

quite unreliable. Great wealth, great population, men of talent in the executive, on the bench, — all the forms right, — and yet, life and freedom are not safe. Why? Because the judges rely on the forms, and do not, like John Brown, use their eyes to see the fact behind the forms. They assume that the United States can protect its witness or its prisoner. And in Massachusetts that is true, but the moment he is carried out of the bounds of Massachusetts, the United States, it is notorious, afford no protection at all; the government, the judges, are an envenomed party, and give such protection as they give in Utah to honest citizens, or in Kansas; such protection as they gave to their own Commodore Paulding, when he was simple enough to mistake the formal instructions of his government for their real meaning.[1] The state judges fear collision between their two allegiances; but there are worse evils than collision; namely, the doing substantial injustice. A good man will see that the use of a judge is to secure good government, and where the citizen's weal is imperilled by abuse of the federal power, to use that arm which can secure it, viz., the local government. Had that been done on certain calamitous occasions, we should not have seen

the honor of Massachusetts trailed in the dust, stained to all ages, once and again, by the ill-timed formalism of a venerable bench. If judges cannot find law enough to maintain the sovereignty of the state, and to protect the life and freedom of every inhabitant not a criminal, it is idle to compliment them as learned and venerable. What avails their learning or veneration? At a pinch, they are no more use than idiots. After the mischance they wring their hands, but they had better never have been born.[1] A Vermont judge, Hutchinson, who has the Declaration of Independence in his heart; a Wisconsin judge, who knows that laws are for the protection of citizens against kidnappers, is worth a court-house full of lawyers so idolatrous of forms as to let go the substance. Is any man in Massachusetts so simple as to believe that when a United States Court in Virginia, now, in its present reign of terror, sends to Connecticut, or New York, or Massachusetts, for a witness, it wants him for a witness? No; it wants him for a party; it wants him for meat to slaughter and eat. And your *habeas corpus* is, in any way in which it has been, or, I fear, is likely to be used, a nuisance, and not a protection; for it takes away his right reliance on himself, and the nat-

ural assistance of his friends and fellow citizens, by offering him a form which is a piece of paper.

But I am detaining the meeting on matters which others understand better. I hope, then, that, in administering relief to John Brown's family, we shall remember all those whom his fate concerns, all who are in sympathy with him, and not forget to aid him in the best way, by securing freedom and independence in Massachusetts.

XI

XI

JOHN BROWN

SPEECH AT SALEM, JANUARY 6, 1860

"A MAN there came, whence none could tell,
Bearing a touchstone in his hand,
And tested all things in the land
By its unerring spell.

A thousand transformations rose
From fair to foul, from foul to fair:
The golden crown he did not spare,
Nor scorn the beggar's clothes.

. . . . . .

Then angrily the people cried,
'The loss outweighs the profit far;
Our goods suffice us as they are:
We will not have them tried.'

And since they could not so avail
To check his unrelenting quest,
They seized him, saying, 'Let him test
How real is our jail!'

But though they slew him with the sword,
And in the fire his touchstone burned,
Its doings could not be o'erturned,
Its undoings restored.

And when, to stop all future harm,
They strewed its ashes to the breeze,
They little guessed each grain of these
Conveyed the perfect charm."

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

JOHN BROWN

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have been struck with one fact, that the best orators who have added their praise to his fame, — and I need not go out of this house to find the purest eloquence in the country, — have one rival who comes off a little better, and that is JOHN BROWN. Everything that is said of him leaves people a little dissatisfied; but as soon as they read his own speeches and letters they are heartily contented, — such is the singleness of purpose which justifies him to the head and the heart of all. Taught by this experience, I mean, in the few remarks I have to make, to cling to his history, or let him speak for himself.

John Brown, the founder of liberty in Kansas, was born in Torrington, Litchfield County, Connecticut, in 1800. When he was five years old his father emigrated to Ohio, and the boy was there set to keep sheep and to look after cattle and dress skins; he went bareheaded and barefooted, and clothed in buckskin. He said that he loved rough play, could never have rough play enough; could not see a seedy hat without wishing to pull it off. But for this it needed

that the playmates should be equal; not one in fine clothes and the other in buckskin; not one his own master, hale and hearty, and the other watched and whipped. But it chanced that in Pennsylvania, where he was sent by his father to collect cattle, he fell in with a boy whom he heartily liked and whom he looked upon as his superior. This boy was a slave; he saw him beaten with an iron shovel, and otherwise maltreated; he saw that this boy had nothing better to look forward to in life, whilst he himself was petted and made much of; for he was much considered in the family where he then stayed, from the circumstance that this boy of twelve years had conducted alone a drove of cattle a hundred miles. But the colored boy had no friend, and no future. This worked such indignation in him that he swore an oath of resistance to slavery as long as he lived. And thus his enterprise to go into Virginia and run off five hundred or a thousand slaves was not a piece of spite or revenge, a plot of two years or of twenty years, but the keeping of an oath made to heaven and earth forty-seven years before. Forty-seven years at least, though I incline to accept his own account of the matter at Charlestown, which makes the date a little older, when he said, "This was all

settled millions of years before the world was made."

He grew up a religious and manly person, in severe poverty; a fair specimen of the best stock of New England; having that force of thought and that sense of right which are the warp and woof of greatness. Our farmers were Orthodox Calvinists, mighty in the Scriptures; had learned that life was a preparation, a "probation," to use their word, for a higher world, and was to be spent in loving and serving mankind.[1]

Thus was formed a romantic character absolutely without any vulgar trait; living to ideal ends, without any mixture of self-indulgence or compromise, such as lowers the value of benevolent and thoughtful men we know; abstemious, refusing luxuries, not sourly and reproachfully, but simply as unfit for his habit; quiet and gentle as a child in the house. And, as happens usually to men of romantic character, his fortunes were romantic. Walter Scott would have delighted to draw his picture and trace his adventurous career. A shepherd and herdsman, he learned the manners of animals, and knew the secret signals by which animals communicate.[2] He made his hard bed on the mountains with them; he learned to drive his flock through thickets all but im-

passable; he had all the skill of a shepherd by choice of breed and by wise husbandry to obtain the best wool, and that for a course of years. And the anecdotes preserved show a far-seeing skill and conduct which, in spite of adverse accidents, should secure, one year with another, an honest reward, first to the farmer, and afterwards to the dealer. If he kept sheep, it was with a royal mind; and if he traded in wool, he was a merchant prince, not in the amount of wealth, but in the protection of the interests confided to him.

I am not a little surprised at the easy effrontery with which political gentlemen, in and out of Congress, take it upon them to say that there are not a thousand men in the North who sympathize with John Brown. It would be far safer and nearer the truth to say that all people, in proportion to their sensibility and self-respect, sympathize with him. For it is impossible to see courage, and disinterestedness, and the love that casts out fear, without sympathy. All women are drawn to him by their predominance of sentiment. All gentlemen, of course, are on his side. I do not mean by "gentlemen," people of scented hair and perfumed handkerchiefs, but men of gentle blood and generosity, "fulfilled

with all nobleness," who, like the Cid, give the outcast leper a share of their bed; like the dying Sidney, pass the cup of cold water to the dying soldier who needs it more. For what is the oath of gentle blood and knighthood? What but to protect the weak and lowly against the strong oppressor?

Nothing is more absurd than to complain of this sympathy, or to complain of a party of men united in opposition to slavery. As well complain of gravity, or the ebb of the tide. Who makes the abolitionist? The slave-holder. The sentiment of mercy is the natural recoil which the laws of the universe provide to protect mankind from destruction by savage passions. And our blind statesmen go up and down, with committees of vigilance and safety, hunting for the origin of this new heresy. They will need a very vigilant committee indeed to find its birthplace, and a very strong force to root it out. For the arch-abolitionist, older than Brown, and older than the Shenandoah Mountains, is Love, whose other name is Justice, which was before Alfred, before Lycurgus, before slavery, and will be after it.[1]

XII

THEODORE PARKER

AN ADDRESS AT THE MEMORIAL MEETING AT THE MUSIC HALL, BOSTON, JUNE 15, 1860

"Here comes Parker, the Orson of parsons, a man
Whom the Church undertook to put under her ban.—
. . . . . .
There 's a background of God to each hard-working feature,
Every word that he speaks has been fierily furnaced
In the blast of a life that has struggled in earnest:
There he stands, looking more like a ploughman than priest,
If not dreadfully awkward, not graceful at least;
. . . . . .
But his periods fall on you, stroke after stroke,
Like the blows of a lumberer felling an oak,
You forget the man wholly, you 're thankful to meet
With a preacher who smacks of the field and the street,
And to hear, you 're not over-particular whence,
Almost Taylor's profusion, quite Latimer's sense."

— Lowell, *A Fable for Critics*.

THEODORE PARKER.

AT the death of a good and admirable person we meet to console and animate each other by the recollection of his virtues.

I have the feeling that every man's biography is at his own expense. He furnishes not only the facts but the report. I mean that all biography is autobiography. It is only what he tells of himself that comes to be known and believed. In Plutarch's lives of Alexander and Pericles, you have the secret whispers of their confidence to their lovers and trusty friends. For it was each report of this kind that impressed those to whom it was told in a manner to secure its being told everywhere to the best, to those who speak with authority to their own times and therefore to ours. For the political rule is a cosmical rule, that if a man is not strong in his own district, he is not a good candidate elsewhere.

He whose voice will not be heard here again could well afford to tell his experiences; they were all honorable to him, and were part of the history of the civil and religious liberty of his times. Theodore Parker was a son of the soil,

charged with the energy of New England, strong, eager, inquisitive of knowledge, of a diligence that never tired, upright, of a haughty independence, yet the gentlest of companions; a man of study, fit for a man of the world; with decided opinions and plenty of power to state them; rapidly pushing his studies so far as to leave few men qualified to sit as his critics.[1] He elected his part of duty, or accepted nobly that assigned him in his rare constitution. Wonderful acquisition of knowledge, a rapid wit that heard all, and welcomed all that came, by seeing its bearing. Such was the largeness of his reception of facts and his skill to employ them that it looked as if he were some president of council to whom a score of telegraphs were ever bringing in reports; and his information would have been excessive, but for the noble use he made of it ever in the interest of humanity. He had a strong understanding, a logical method, a love for facts, a rapid eye for their historic relations, and a skill in stripping them of traditional lustres. He had a sprightly fancy, and often amused himself with throwing his meaning into pretty apologues; yet we can hardly ascribe to his mind the poetic element, though his scholarship had made him a reader and quoter of verses.

A little more feeling of the poetic significance of his facts would have disqualified him for some of his severer offices to his generation. The old religions have a charm for most minds which it is a little uncanny to disturb. 'T is sometimes a question, shall we not leave them to decay without rude shocks? I remember that I found some harshness in his treatment both of Greek and of Hebrew antiquity, and sympathized with the pain of many good people in his auditory, whilst I acquitted him, of course, of any wish to be flippant. He came at a time when, to the irresistible march of opinion, the forms still retained by the most advanced sects showed loose and lifeless, and he, with something less of affectionate attachment to the old, or with more vigorous logic, rejected them. 'T is objected to him that he scattered too many illusions. Perhaps more tenderness would have been graceful; but it is vain to charge him with perverting the opinions of the new generation.

The opinions of men are organic. Simply, those came to him who found themselves expressed by him. And had they not met this enlightened mind, in which they beheld their own opinions combined with zeal in every cause of love and humanity, they would have suspected

their opinions and suppressed them, and so sunk into melancholy or malignity — a feeling of loneliness and hostility to what was reckoned respectable. 'T is plain to me that he has achieved a historic immortality here; that he has so woven himself in these few years into the history of Boston, that he can never be left out of your annals. It will not be in the acts of city councils, nor of obsequious mayors; nor, in the state-house, the proclamations of governors, with their failing virtue — failing them at critical moments — that coming generations will study what really befell; but in the plain lessons of Theodore Parker in this Music Hall, in Faneuil Hall, or in legislative committee rooms, that the true temper and authentic record of these days will be read. The next generation will care little for the chances of elections that govern governors now, it will care little for fine gentlemen who behaved shabbily; but it will read very intelligently in his rough story, fortified with exact anecdotes, precise with names and dates, what part was taken by each actor; who threw himself into the cause of humanity and came to the rescue of civilization at a hard pinch, and who blocked its course.

The vice charged against America is the want of sincerity in leading men. It does not lie at his

door. He never kept back the truth for fear to make an enemy. But, on the other hand, it was complained that he was bitter and harsh, that his zeal burned with too hot a flame. It is so difficult, in evil times, to escape this charge! for the faithful preacher most of all. It was his merit, like Luther, Knox and Latimer, and John Baptist, to speak tart truth, when that was peremptory and when there were few to say it. But his sympathy for goodness was not less energetic. One fault he had, he overestimated his friends, — I may well say it, — and sometimes vexed them with the importunity of his good opinion, whilst they knew better the ebb which follows unfounded praise. He was capable, it must be said, of the most unmeasured eulogies on those he esteemed, especially if he had any jealousy that they did not stand with the Boston public as highly as they ought. His commanding merit as a reformer is this, that he insisted beyond all men in pulpits — I cannot think of one rival — that the essence of Christianity is its practical morals; it is there for use, or it is nothing; and if you combine it with sharp trading, or with ordinary city ambitions to gloze over municipal corruptions, or private intemperance, or successful fraud, or immoral politics, or unjust wars, or the

cheating of Indians, or the robbery of frontier nations, or leaving your principles at home to follow on the high seas or in Europe a supple complaisance to tyrants, — it is a hypocrisy, and the truth is not in you; and no love of religious music or of dreams of Swedenborg, or praise of John Wesley, or of Jeremy Taylor, can save you from the Satan which you are.

His ministry fell on a political crisis also; on the years when Southern slavery broke over its old banks, made new and vast pretensions, and wrung from the weakness or treachery of Northern people fatal concessions in the Fugitive Slave Bill and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Two days, bitter in the memory of Boston, the days of the rendition of Sims and of Burns, made the occasion of his most remarkable discourses. He kept nothing back. In terrible earnest he denounced the public crime, and meted out to every official, high and low, his due portion.[1] By the incessant power of his statement, he made and held a party. It was his great service to freedom. He took away the reproach of silent consent that would otherwise have lain against the indignant minority, by uttering in the hour and place wherein these outrages were done, the stern protest.

But whilst I praise this frank speaker, I have no wish to accuse the silence of others. There are men of good powers who have so much sympathy that they must be silent when they are not in sympathy. If you don't agree with them, they know they only injure the truth by speaking. Their faculties will not play them true, and they do not wish to squeak and gibber, and so they shut their mouths. I can readily forgive this, only not the other, the false tongue which makes the worse appear the better cause. There were, of course, multitudes to censure and defame this truth-speaker. But the brave know the brave. Fops, whether in hotels or churches, will utter the fop's opinion, and faintly hope for the salvation of his soul; but his manly enemies, who despised the fops, honored him; and it is well known that his great hospitable heart was the sanctuary to which every soul conscious of an earnest opinion came for sympathy — alike the brave slave-holder and the brave slave-rescuer. These met in the house of this honest man — for every sound heart loves a responsible person, one who does not in generous company say generous things, and in mean company base things, but says one thing, now cheerfully, now indignantly, but always because he must, and

because he sees that, whether he speak or refrain from speech, this is said over him ; and history, nature and all souls testify to the same.

Ah, my brave brother ! it seems as if, in a frivolous age, our loss were immense, and your place cannot be supplied. But you will already be consoled in the transfer of your genius, knowing well that the nature of the world will affirm to all men, in all times, that which for twenty-five years you valiantly spoke ; that the winds of Italy murmur the same truth over your grave ; the winds of America over these bereaved streets ; that the sea which bore your mourners home affirms it, the stars in their courses, and the inspirations of youth ; whilst the polished and pleasant traitors to human rights, with perverted learning and disgraced graces, rot and are forgotten with their double tongue saying all that is sordid for the corruption of man.

The sudden and singular eminence of Mr. Parker, the importance of his name and influence, are the verdict of his country to his virtues. We have few such men to lose ; amiable and blameless at home, feared abroad as the standard-bearer of liberty, taking all the duties he could grasp, and more, refusing to spare

himself, he has gone down in early glory to his grave, to be a living and enlarging power, wherever learning, wit, honest valor and independence are honored.[1]

XIII

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

To the mizzen, the main, and the fore
Up with it once more! —
The old tri-color,
The ribbon of power,
The white, blue and red which the nations adore!
It was down at half-mast
For a grief — that is past!
To the emblem of glory no sorrow can last!

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

USE, labor of each for all, is the health and virtue of all beings. *Ich dien*, I serve, is a truly royal motto. And it is the mark of nobleness to volunteer the lowest service, the greatest spirit only attaining to humility. Nay, God is God because he is the servant of all. Well, now here comes this conspiracy of slavery, — they call it an institution, I call it a destitution, — this stealing of men and setting them to work, stealing their labor, and the thief sitting idle himself; and for two or three ages it has lasted, and has yielded a certain quantity of rice, cotton and sugar. And, standing on this doleful experience, these people have endeavored to reverse the natural sentiments of mankind, and to pronounce labor disgraceful, and the well-being of a man to consist in eating the fruit of other men's labor. Labor: a man coins himself into his labor; turns his day, his strength, his thought, his affection into some product which remains as the visible sign of his power; and to protect that, to secure that to him, to secure his past self to his future self, is the object of all government. There is no

interest in any country so imperative as that of labor; it covers all, and constitutions and governments exist for that, — to protect and insure it to the laborer. All honest men are daily striving to earn their bread by their industry. And who is this who tosses his empty head at this blessing in disguise, the constitution of human nature, and calls labor vile, and insults the faithful workman at his daily toil? I see for such madness no hellebore, — for such calamity no solution but servile war and the Africanization of the country that permits it.

At this moment in America the aspects of political society absorb attention. In every house, from Canada to the Gulf, the children ask the serious father, — "What is the news of the war to-day, and when will there be better times?" The boys have no new clothes, no gifts, no journeys; the girls must go without new bonnets; boys and girls find their education, this year, less liberal and complete.[1] All the little hopes that heretofore made the year pleasant are deferred. The state of the country fills us with anxiety and stern duties. We have attempted to hold together two states of civilization: a higher state, where labor and the tenure of land and the right of suffrage are democrat-

ical; and a lower state, in which the old military tenure of prisoners or slaves, and of power and land in a few hands, makes an oligarchy: we have attempted to hold these two states of society under one law. But the rude and early state of society does not work well with the later, nay, works badly, and has poisoned politics, public morals and social intercourse in the Republic, now for many years.

The times put this question, Why cannot the best civilization be extended over the whole country, since the disorder of the less-civilized portion menaces the existence of the country? Is this secular progress we have described, this evolution of man to the highest powers, only to give him sensibility, and not to bring duties with it? Is he not to make his knowledge practical? to stand and to withstand? Is not civilization heroic also? Is it not for action? has it not a will? "There are periods," said Niebuhr, "when something much better than happiness and security of life is attainable." We live in a new and exceptionable age. America is another word for Opportunity. Our whole history appears like a last effort of the Divine Providence in behalf of the human race; and a literal, slavish following of precedents, as by a justice of the

peace, is not for those who at this hour lead the destinies of this people. The evil you contend with has taken alarming proportions, and you still content yourself with parrying the blows it aims, but, as if enchanted, abstain from striking at the cause.[1]

If the American people hesitate, it is not for want of warning or advices. The telegraph has been swift enough to announce our disasters. The journals have not suppressed the extent of the calamity. Neither was there any want of argument or of experience. If the war brought any surprise to the North, it was not the fault of sentinels on the watch-tower, who had furnished full details of the designs, the muster and the means of the enemy. Neither was anything concealed of the theory or practice of slavery. To what purpose make more big books of these statistics? There are already mountains of facts, if any one wants them. But people do not want them. They bring their opinion into the world. If they have a comatose tendency in the brain, they are pro-slavery while they live; if of a nervous sanguineous temperament, they are abolitionists. Then interests were never persuaded. Can you convince the shoe interest, or the iron interest, or the cotton interest, by reading pass-

ages from Milton or Montesquieu? You wish to satisfy people that slavery is bad economy. Why, the Edinburgh Review pounded on that string, and made out its case, forty years ago. A democratic statesman said to me, long since, that, if he owned the state of Kentucky, he would manumit all the slaves, and be a gainer by the transaction. Is this new? No, everybody knows it. As a general economy it is admitted. But there is no one owner of the state, but a good many small owners. One man owns land and slaves; another owns slaves only. Here is a woman who has no other property, — like a lady in Charleston I knew of, who owned fifteen sweeps and rode in her carriage. It is clearly a vast inconvenience to each of these to make any change, and they are fretful and talkative, and all their friends are; and those less interested are inert, and, from want of thought, averse to innovation. It is like free trade, certainly the interest of nations, but by no means the interest of certain towns and districts, which tariff feeds fat; and the eager interest of the few overpowers the apathetic general conviction of the many. Banknotes rob the public, but are such a daily convenience that we silence our scruples and make believe they are gold.

So imposts are the cheap and right taxation; but, by the dislike of people to pay out a direct tax, governments are forced to render life costly by making them pay twice as much, hidden in the price of tea and sugar.

In this national crisis, it is not argument that we want, but that rare courage which dares commit itself to a principle, believing that Nature is its ally, and will create the instruments it requires, and more than make good any petty and injurious profit which it may disturb. There never was such a combination as this of ours, and the rules to meet it are not set down in any history. We want men of original perception and original action, who can open their eyes wider than to a nationality, namely, to considerations of benefit to the human race, can act in the interest of civilization. Government must not be a parish clerk, a justice of the peace. It has, of necessity, in any crisis of the state, the absolute powers of a dictator. The existing administration is entitled to the utmost candor. It is to be thanked for its angelic virtue, compared with any executive experiences with which we have been familiar. But the times will not allow us to indulge in compliment. I wish I saw in the people that inspiration which, if gov-

ernment would not obey the same, would leave the government behind and create on the moment the means and executors it wanted. Better the war should more dangerously threaten us, — should threaten fracture in what is still whole, and punish us with burned capitals and slaughtered regiments, and so exasperate the people to energy, exasperate our nationality. There are Scriptures written invisibly on men's hearts, whose letters do not come out until they are enraged. They can be read by war-fires, and by eyes in the last peril.

We cannot but remember that there have been days in American history, when, if the free states had done their duty, slavery had been blocked by an immovable barrier, and our recent calamities forever precluded. The free states yielded, and every compromise was surrender and invited new demands. Here again is a new occasion which heaven offers to sense and virtue. It looks as if we held the fate of the fairest possession of mankind in our hands, to be saved by our firmness or to be lost by hesitation.

The one power that has legs long enough and strong enough to wade across the Potomac offers itself at this hour; the one strong enough

to bring all the civility up to the height of that which is best, prays now at the door of Congress for leave to move. Emancipation is the demand of civilization. That is a principle; everything else is an intrigue. This is a progressive policy, puts the whole people in healthy, productive, amiable position, puts every man in the South in just and natural relations with every man in the North, laborer with laborer.

I shall not attempt to unfold the details of the project of emancipation. It has been stated with great ability by several of its leading advocates. I will only advert to some leading points of the argument, at the risk of repeating the reasons of others. The war is welcome to the Southerner; a chivalrous sport to him, like hunting, and suits his semi-civilized condition. On the climbing scale of progress, he is just up to war, and has never appeared to such advantage as in the last twelvemonth. It does not suit us. We are advanced some ages on the war-state, — to trade, art and general cultivation. His laborer works for him at home, so that he loses no labor by the war. All our soldiers are laborers; so that the South, with its inferior numbers, is almost on a footing in effective war-population with the North. Again, as long as

we fight without any affirmative step taken by the government, any word intimating forfeiture in the rebel states of their old privileges under the law, they and we fight on the same side, for slavery. Again, if we conquer the enemy, — what then? We shall still have to keep him under, and it will cost as much to hold him down as it did to get him down. Then comes the summer, and the fever will drive the soldiers home; next winter we must begin at the beginning, and conquer him over again. What use then to take a fort, or a privateer, or get possession of an inlet, or to capture a regiment of rebels?

But one weapon we hold which is sure. Congress can, by edict, as a part of the military defence which it is the duty of Congress to provide, abolish slavery, and pay for such slaves as we ought to pay for. Then the slaves near our armies will come to us; those in the interior will know in a week what their rights are, and will, where opportunity offers, prepare to take them. Instantly, the armies that now confront you must run home to protect their estates, and must stay there, and your enemies will disappear.

There can be no safety until this step is taken.

We fancy that the endless debate, emphasized by the crime and by the cannons of this war, has brought the free states to some conviction that it can never go well with us whilst this mischief of slavery remains in our politics, and that by concert or by might we must put an end to it. But we have too much experience of the futility of an easy reliance on the momentary good dispositions of the public. There does exist, perhaps, a popular will that the Union shall not be broken, — that our trade, and therefore our laws, must have the whole breadth of the continent, and from Canada to the Gulf. But since this is the rooted belief and will of the people, so much the more are they in danger, when impatient of defeats, or impatient of taxes, to go with a rush for some peace; and what kind of peace shall at that moment be easiest attained, they will make concessions for it, — will give up the slaves, and the whole torment of the past half-century will come back to be endured anew.

Neither do I doubt, if such a composition should take place, that the Southerners will come back quietly and politely, leaving their haughty dictation. It will be an era of good feelings. There will be a lull after so loud a

storm; and, no doubt, there will be discreet men from that section who will earnestly strive to inaugurate more moderate and fair administration of the government, and the North will for a time have its full share and more, in place and counsel. But this will not last; — not for want of sincere good will in sensible Southerners, but because Slavery will again speak through them its harsh necessity. It cannot live but by injustice, and it will be unjust and violent to the end of the world.[1]

The power of Emancipation is this, that it alters the atomic social constitution of the Southern people. Now, their interest is in keeping out white labor; then, when they must pay wages, their interest will be to let it in, to get the best labor, and, if they fear their blacks, to invite Irish, German and American laborers. Thus, whilst Slavery makes and keeps disunion, Emancipation removes the whole objection to union. Emancipation at one stroke elevates the poor-white of the South, and identifies his interest with that of the Northern laborer.

Now, in the name of all that is simple and generous, why should not this great right be done? Why should not America be capable of a second stroke for the well-being of the human

race, as eighty or ninety years ago she was for the first, — of an affirmative step in the interests of human civility, urged on her, too, not by any romance of sentiment, but by her own extreme perils? It is very certain that the statesman who shall break through the cobwebs of doubt, fear and petty cavil that lie in the way, will be greeted by the unanimous thanks of mankind. Men reconcile themselves very fast to a bold and good measure when once it is taken, though they condemned it in advance. A week before the two captive commissioners were surrendered to England, every one thought it could not be done: it would divide the North. It was done, and in two days all agreed it was the right action.[1] And this action, which costs so little (the parties injured by it being such a handful that they can very easily be indemnified), rids the world, at one stroke, of this degrading nuisance, the cause of war and ruin to nations. This measure at once puts all parties right. This is borrowing, as I said, the omnipotence of a principle. What is so foolish as the terror lest the blacks should be made furious by freedom and wages? It is denying these that is the outrage, and makes the danger from the blacks. But justice satisfies everybody, — white man, red man, yellow man

and black man. All like wages, and the appetite grows by feeding.

But this measure, to be effectual, must come speedily. The weapon is slipping out of our hands. "Time," say the Indian Scriptures, "drinketh up the essence of every great and noble action which ought to be performed, and which is delayed in the execution." [1]

I hope it is not a fatal objection to this policy that it is simple and beneficent thoroughly, which is the tribute of a moral action. An unprecedented material prosperity has not tended to make us Stoics or Christians. But the laws by which the universe is organized reappear at every point, and will rule it. The end of all political struggle is to establish morality as the basis of all legislation. It is not free institutions, it is not a republic, it is not a democracy, that is the end, — no, but only the means. Morality is the object of government.[2] We want a state of things in which crime shall not pay. This is the consolation on which we rest in the darkness of the future and the afflictions of to-day, that the government of the world is moral, and does forever destroy what is not. It is the maxim of natural philosophers that the natural forces wear out in time all obstacles, and take place: and it

is the maxim of history that victory always falls at last where it ought to fall; or, there is perpetual march and progress to ideas. But in either case, no link of the chain can drop out. Nature works through her appointed elements; and ideas must work through the brains and the arms of good and brave men, or they are no better than dreams.

Since the above pages were written, President Lincoln has proposed to Congress that the government shall coöperate with any state that shall enact a gradual abolishment of slavery. In the recent series of national successes, this message is the best. It marks the happiest day in the political year. The American Executive ranges itself for the first time on the side of freedom. If Congress has been backward, the President has advanced. This state-paper is the more interesting that it appears to be the President's individual act, done under a strong sense of duty. He speaks his own thought in his own style. All thanks and honor to the Head of the State! The message has been received throughout the country with praise, and, we doubt not, with more pleasure than has been spoken. If Congress accords with the President, it is not yet too

late to begin the emancipation ; but we think it will always be too late to make it gradual. All experience agrees that it should be immediate.' More and better than the President has spoken shall, perhaps, the effect of this message be, — but, we are sure, not more or better than he hoped in his heart, when, thoughtful of all the complexities of his position, he penned these cautious words.

XIV

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED IN BOSTON IN SEPTEMBER, 1862

. . . . . .

To-day unbind the captive,
So only are ye unbound;
Lift up a people from the dust,
Trump of their rescue, sound!

Pay ransom to the owner
And fill the bag to the brim.
Who is the owner? The slave is owner,
And ever was. Pay him.

O North! give him beauty for rags,
And honor, O South! for his shame;
Nevada! coin thy golden crags
With freedom's image and name.

Up! and the dusky race
That sat in darkness long,—
Be swift their feet as antelopes,
And as behemoth strong.

Come, East and West and North,
By races, as snow-flakes,
And carry my purpose forth,
Which neither halts nor shakes.

My will fulfilled shall be,
For in daylight or in dark,
My thunderbolt has eyes to see
His way home to the mark.

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

IN so many arid forms which states encrust themselves with, once in a century, if so often, a poetic act and record occur. These are the jets of thought into affairs, when, roused by danger or inspired by genius, the political leaders of the day break the else insurmountable routine of class and local legislation, and take a step forward in the direction of catholic and universal interests. Every step in the history of political liberty is a sally of the human mind into the untried Future, and has the interest of genius, and is fruitful in heroic anecdotes. Liberty is a slow fruit. It comes, like religion, for short periods, and in rare conditions, as if awaiting a culture of the race which shall make it organic and permanent. Such moments of expansion in modern history were the Confession of Augsburg, the plantation of America, the English Commonwealth of 1648, the Declaration of American Independence in 1776, the British emancipation of slaves in the West Indies, the passage of the Reform Bill, the repeal of the Corn-Laws, the Magnetic Ocean

Telegraph, though yet imperfect, the passage of the Homestead Bill in the last Congress, and now, eminently, President Lincoln's Proclamation on the twenty-second of September. These are acts of great scope, working on a long future and on permanent interests, and honoring alike those who initiate and those who receive them. These measures provoke no noisy joy, but are received into a sympathy so deep as to apprise us that mankind are greater and better than we know.' At such times it appears as if a new public were created to greet the new event. It is as when an orator, having ended the compliments and pleasantries with which he conciliated attention, and having run over the superficial fitness and commodities of the measure he urges, suddenly, lending himself to some happy inspiration, announces with vibrating voice the grand human principles involved; — the bravos and wits who greeted him loudly thus far are surprised and overawed; a new audience is found in the heart of the assembly, — an audience hitherto passive and unconcerned, now at last so searched and kindled that they come forward, every one a representative of mankind, standing for all nationalities.

The extreme moderation with which the Presi-

dent advanced to his design, — his long-avowed expectant policy, as if he chose to be strictly the executive of the best public sentiment of the country, waiting only till it should be unmistakably pronounced, — so fair a mind that none ever listened so patiently to such extreme varieties of opinion, — so reticent that his decision has taken all parties by surprise, whilst yet it is just the sequel of his prior acts, — the firm tone in which he announces it, without inflation or surplusage, — all these have bespoken such favor to the act that, great as the popularity of the President has been, we are beginning to think that we have underestimated the capacity and virtue which the Divine Providence has made an instrument of benefit so vast. He has been permitted to do more for America than any other American man. He is well entitled to the most indulgent construction. Forget all that we thought shortcomings, every mistake, every delay. In the extreme embarrassments of his part, call these endurance, wisdom, magnanimity ; illuminated, as they now are, by this dazzling success.

When we consider the immense opposition that has been neutralized or converted by the progress of the war (for it is not long since the

President anticipated the resignation of a large number of officers in the army, and the secession of three states, on the promulgation of this policy), — when we see how the great stake which foreign nations hold in our affairs has recently brought every European power as a client into this court, and it became every day more apparent what gigantic and what remote interests were to be affected by the decision of the President, — one can hardly say the deliberation was too long. Against all timorous counsels he had the courage to seize the moment; and such was his position, and such the felicity attending the action, that he has replaced government in the good graces of mankind. "Better is virtue in the sovereign than plenty in the season," say the Chinese. 'T is wonderful what power is, and how ill it is used, and how its ill use makes life mean, and the sunshine dark. Life in America had lost much of its attraction in the later years. The virtues of a good magistrate undo a world of mischief, and, because Nature works with rectitude, seem vastly more potent than the acts of bad governors, which are ever tempered by the good nature in the people, and the incessant resistance which fraud and violence encounter. The acts of good governors work a

geometrical ratio, as one midsummer day seems to repair the damage of a year of war.

A day which most of us dared not hope to see, an event worth the dreadful war, worth its costs and uncertainties, seems now to be close before us. October, November, December will have passed over beating hearts and plotting brains: then the hour will strike, and all men of African descent who have faculty enough to find their way to our lines are assured of the protection of American law.

It is by no means necessary that this measure should be suddenly marked by any signal results on the negroes or on the rebel masters. The force of the act is that it commits the country to this justice, — that it compels the innumerable officers, civil, military, naval, of the Republic to range themselves on the line of this equity. It draws the fashion to this side. It is not a measure that admits of being taken back. Done, it cannot be undone by a new administration. For slavery overpowers the disgust of the moral sentiment only through immemorial usage. It cannot be introduced as an improvement of the nineteenth century. This act makes that the lives of our heroes have not been sacrificed in vain. It makes a victory of our defeats. Our hurts are

healed; the health of the nation is repaired. With a victory like this, we can stand many disasters. It does not promise the redemption of the black race; that lies not with us: but it relieves it of our opposition. The President by this act has paroled all the slaves in America; they will no more fight against us: and it relieves our race once for all of its crime and false position. The first condition of success is secured in putting ourselves right. We have recovered ourselves from our false position, and planted ourselves on a law of Nature: —

> "If that fail,
> The pillared firmament is rottenness,
> And earth's base built on stubble." [1]

The government has assured itself of the best constituency in the world: every spark of intellect, every virtuous feeling, every religious heart, every man of honor, every poet, every philosopher, the generosity of the cities, the health of the country, the strong arms of the mechanic, the endurance of farmers, the passionate conscience of women, the sympathy of distant nations, — all rally to its support.

Of course, we are assuming the firmness of the policy thus declared. It must not be a paper proclamation. We confide that Mr. Lincoln is in

earnest, and as he has been slow in making up his mind, has resisted the importunacy of parties and of events to the latest moment, he will be as absolute in his adhesion. Not only will he repeat and follow up his stroke, but the nation will add its irresistible strength. If the ruler has duties, so has the citizen. In times like these, when the nation is imperilled, what man can, without shame, receive good news from day to day without giving good news of himself? What right has any one to read in the journals tidings of victories, if he has not bought them by his own valor, treasure, personal sacrifice, or by service as good in his own department? With this blot removed from our national honor, this heavy load lifted off the national heart, we shall not fear henceforward to show our faces among mankind. We shall cease to be hypocrites and pretenders, but what we have styled our free institutions will be such.'

In the light of this event the public distress begins to be removed. What if the brokers' quotations show our stocks discredited, and the gold dollar costs one hundred and twenty-seven cents? These tables are fallacious. Every acre in the free states gained substantial value on the twenty-second of September. The cause of

disunion and war has been reached and begun to be removed. Every man's house-lot and garden are relieved of the malaria which the purest winds and strongest sunshine could not penetrate and purge. The territory of the Union shines to-day with a lustre which every European emigrant can discern from far; a sign of inmost security and permanence. Is it feared that taxes will check immigration? That depends on what the taxes are spent for. If they go to fill up this yawning Dismal Swamp, which engulfed armies and populations, and created plague, and neutralized hitherto all the vast capabilities of this continent, — then this taxation, which makes the land wholesome and habitable, and will draw all men unto it, is the best investment in which property-holder ever lodged his earnings.

Whilst we have pointed out the opportuneness of the Proclamation, it remains to be said that the President had no choice. He might look wistfully for what variety of courses lay open to him; every line but one was closed up with fire. This one, too, bristled with danger, but through it was the sole safety. The measure he has adopted was imperative. It is wonderful to see the unseasonable senility of what is called the Peace Party, through all its masks, blinding their eyes

to the main feature of the war, namely, its inevitableness. The war existed long before the cannonade of Sumter, and could not be postponed. It might have begun otherwise or elsewhere, but war was in the minds and bones of the combatants, it was written on the iron leaf, and you might as easily dodge gravitation. If we had consented to a peaceable secession of the rebels, the divided sentiment of the border states made peaceable secession impossible, the insatiable temper of the South made it impossible, and the slaves on the border, wherever the border might be, were an incessant fuel to rekindle the fire. Give the Confederacy New Orleans, Charleston, and Richmond, and they would have demanded St. Louis and Baltimore. Give them these, and they would have insisted on Washington. Give them Washington, and they would have assumed the army and navy, and, through these, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. It looks as if the battle-field would have been at least as large in that event as it is now. The war was formidable, but could not be avoided. The war was and is an immense mischief, but brought with it the immense benefit of drawing a line and rallying the free states to fix it impassably, — preventing the whole force of Southern connection

and influence throughout the North from distracting every city with endless confusion, detaching that force and reducing it to handfuls, and, in the progress of hostilities, disinfecting us of our habitual proclivity, through the affection of trade and the traditions of the Democratic party, to follow Southern leading.'

These necessities which have dictated the conduct of the federal government are overlooked especially by our foreign critics. The popular statement of the opponents of the war abroad is the impossibility of our success. "If you could add," say they, "to your strength the whole army of England, of France and of Austria, you could not coerce eight millions of people to come under this government against their will." This is an odd thing for an Englishman, a Frenchman or an Austrian to say, who remembers Europe of the last seventy years, — the condition of Italy, until 1859, — of Poland, since 1793, — of France, of French Algiers, — of British Ireland, and British India. But granting the truth, rightly read, of the historical aphorism, that "the people always conquer," it is to be noted that, in the Southern States, the tenure of land and the local laws, with slavery, give the social system not a democratic but an

aristocratic complexion ; and those states have shown every year a more hostile and aggressive temper, until the instinct of self-preservation forced us into the war. And the aim of the war on our part is indicated by the aim of the President's Proclamation, namely, to break up the false combination of Southern society, to destroy the piratic feature in it which makes it our enemy only as it is the enemy of the human race, and so allow its reconstruction on a just and healthful basis. Then new affinities will act, the old repulsion will cease, and, the cause of war being removed, Nature and trade may be trusted to establish a lasting peace.

We think we cannot overstate the wisdom and benefit of this act of the government. The malignant cry of the Secession press within the free states, and the recent action of the Confederate Congress, are decisive as to its efficiency and correctness of aim. Not less so is the silent joy which has greeted it in all generous hearts, and the new hope it has breathed into the world. It was well to delay the steamers at the wharves until this edict could be put on board. It will be an insurance to the ship as it goes plunging through the sea with glad tidings to all people. Happy are the young, who find the pestilence

cleansed out of the earth, leaving open to them an honest career. Happy the old, who see Nature purified before they depart. Do not let the dying die: hold them back to this world, until you have charged their ear and heart with this message to other spiritual societies, announcing the melioration of our planet:—

> "Incertainties now crown themselves assured,
> And Peace proclaims olives of endless age." [1]

Meantime that ill-fated, much-injured race which the Proclamation respects will lose somewhat of the dejection sculptured for ages in their bronzed countenance, uttered in the wailing of their plaintive music, — a race naturally benevolent, docile, industrious, and whose very miseries sprang from their great talent for usefulness, which, in a more moral age, will not only defend their independence, but will give them a rank among nations.[2]

XV

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

REMARKS AT THE FUNERAL SERVICES HELD IN CONCORD, APRIL 19, 1865

"NATURE, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.
How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not lured by any cheat of birth,
But by his clear-grained human worth,
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;
They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple-tempered will
That bent, like perfect steel, to spring again and thrust
. . . . . .
Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,
Ere any names of Serf and Peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface; . . .
Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face."

LOWELL, *Commemoration Ode.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WE meet under the gloom of a calamity which darkens down over the minds of good men in all civil society, as the fearful tidings travel over sea, over land, from country to country, like the shadow of an uncalculated eclipse over the planet. Old as history is, and manifold as are its tragedies, I doubt if any death has caused so much pain to mankind as this has caused, or will cause, on its announcement; and this, not so much because nations are by modern arts brought so closely together, as because of the mysterious hopes and fears which, in the present day, are connected with the name and institutions of America.

In this country, on Saturday, every one was struck dumb, and saw at first only deep below deep, as he meditated on the ghastly blow. And perhaps, at this hour, when the coffin which contains the dust of the President sets forward on its long march through mourning states, on its way to his home in Illinois, we might well be silent, and suffer the awful voices of the time to thunder to us. Yes, but that first despair was brief: the man was not so to be

mourned. He was the most active and hopeful of men; and his work had not perished: but acclamations of praise for the task he had accomplished burst out into a song of triumph, which even tears for his death cannot keep down.

The President stood before us as a man of the people. He was thoroughly American, had never crossed the sea, had never been spoiled by English insularity or French dissipation; a quite native, aboriginal man, as an acorn from the oak; no aping of foreigners, no frivolous accomplishments, Kentuckian born, working on a farm, a flatboatman, a captain in the Black Hawk War, a country lawyer, a representative in the rural legislature of Illinois; — on such modest foundations the broad structure of his fame was laid. How slowly, and yet by happily prepared steps, he came to his place. All of us remember — it is only a history of five or six years — the surprise and the disappointment of the country at his first nomination by the convention at Chicago. Mr. Seward, then in the culmination of his good fame, was the favorite of the Eastern States. And when the new and comparatively unknown name of Lincoln was announced (notwithstanding the report

of the acclamations of that convention), we heard the result coldly and sadly. It seemed too rash, on a purely local reputation, to build so grave a trust in such anxious times ; and men naturally talked of the chances in politics as incalculable. But it turned out not to be chance. The profound good opinion which the people of Illinois and of the West had conceived of him, and which they had imparted to their colleagues, that they also might justify themselves to their constituents at home, was not rash, though they did not begin to know the riches of his worth.[1]

A plain man of the people, an extraordinary fortune attended him. He offered no shining qualities at the first encounter ; he did not offend by superiority. He had a face and manner which disarmed suspicion, which inspired confidence, which confirmed good will. He was a man without vices. He had a strong sense of duty, which it was very easy for him to obey. Then, he had what farmers call a long head ; was excellent in working out the sum for himself ; in arguing his case and convincing you fairly and firmly. Then, it turned out that he was a great worker ; had prodigious faculty of performance ; worked easily. A good worker is

so rare; everybody has some disabling quality. In a host of young men that start together and promise so many brilliant leaders for the next age, each fails on trial; one by bad health, one by conceit, or by love of pleasure, or lethargy, or an ugly temper, — each has some disqualifying fault that throws him out of the career. But this man was sound to the core, cheerful, persistent, all right for labor, and liked nothing so well.

Then, he had a vast good nature, which made him tolerant and accessible to all; fair-minded, leaning to the claim of the petitioner; affable, and not sensible to the affliction which the innumerable visits paid to him when President would have brought to any one else.[1] And how this good nature became a noble humanity, in many a tragic case which the events of the war brought to him, every one will remember; and with what increasing tenderness he dealt when a whole race was thrown on his compassion. The poor negro said of him, on an impressive occasion, "Massa Linkum am eberywhere."

Then his broad good humor, running easily into jocular talk, in which he delighted and in which he excelled, was a rich gift to this wise man. It enabled him to keep his secret; to

meet every kind of man and every rank in society; to take off the edge of the severest decisions; to mask his own purpose and sound his companion; and to catch with true instinct the temper of every company he addressed. And, more than all, it is to a man of severe labor, in anxious and exhausting crises, the natural restorative, good as sleep, and is the protection of the overdriven brain against rancor and insanity.

He is the author of a multitude of good sayings, so disguised as pleasantries that it is certain they had no reputation at first but as jests; and only later, by the very acceptance and adoption they find in the mouths of millions, turn out to be the wisdom of the hour. I am sure if this man had ruled in a period of less facility of printing, he would have become mythological in a very few years, like Æsop or Pilpay, or one of the Seven Wise Masters, by his fables and proverbs. But the weight and penetration of many passages in his letters, messages and speeches, hidden now by the very closeness of their application to the moment, are destined hereafter to wide fame. What pregnant definitions; what unerring common sense; what foresight; and, on great occasion, what lofty, and

more than national, what humane tone! His brief speech at Gettysburg will not easily be surpassed by words on any recorded occasion. This, and one other American speech, that of John Brown to the court that tried him, and a part of Kossuth's speech at Birmingham, can only be compared with each other, and with no fourth.

His occupying the chair of state was a triumph of the good sense of mankind, and of the public conscience. This middle-class country had got a middle-class president, at last. Yes, in manners and sympathies, but not in powers, for his powers were superior. This man grew according to the need. His mind mastered the problem of the day; and as the problem grew, so did his comprehension of it. Rarely was man so fitted to the event. In the midst of fears and jealousies, in the Babel of counsels and parties, this man wrought incessantly with all his might and all his honesty, laboring to find what the people wanted, and how to obtain that. It cannot be said there is any exaggeration of his worth. If ever a man was fairly tested, he was. There was no lack of resistance, nor of slander, nor of ridicule. The times have allowed no state secrets; the nation has been in such ferment, such multitudes had

to be trusted, that no secret could be kept. Every door was ajar, and we know all that befell.

Then, what an occasion was the whirlwind of the war. Here was place for no holiday magistrate, no fair-weather sailor; the new pilot was hurried to the helm in a tornado. In four years, — four years of battle-days, — his endurance, his fertility of resources, his magnanimity, were sorely tried and never found wanting. There, by his courage, his justice, his even temper, his fertile counsel, his humanity, he stood a heroic figure in the centre of a heroic epoch. He is the true history of the American people in his time. Step by step he walked before them; slow with their slowness, quickening his march by theirs, the true representative of this continent; an entirely public man; father of his country, the pulse of twenty millions throbbing in his heart, the thought of their minds articulated by his tongue.

Adam Smith remarks that the axe, which in Houbraken's portraits of British kings and worthies is engraved under those who have suffered at the block, adds a certain lofty charm to the picture. And who does not see, even in this tragedy so recent, how fast the terror and ruin of

the massacre are already burning into glory around the victim? Far happier this fate than to have lived to be wished away; to have watched the decay of his own faculties; to have seen — perhaps even he — the proverbial ingratitude of statesmen; to have seen mean men preferred. Had he not lived long enough to keep the greatest promise that ever man made to his fellow men, — the practical abolition of slavery? He had seen Tennessee, Missouri and Maryland emancipate their slaves. He had seen Savannah, Charleston and Richmond surrendered; had seen the main army of the rebellion lay down its arms. He had conquered the public opinion of Canada, England and France.[1] Only Washington can compare with him in fortune.

And what if it should turn out, in the unfolding of the web, that he had reached the term; that this heroic deliverer could no longer serve us; that the rebellion had touched its natural conclusion, and what remained to be done required new and uncommitted hands, — a new spirit born out of the ashes of the war; and that Heaven, wishing to show the world a completed benefactor, shall make him serve his country even more by his death than by his life? Na-

tions, like kings, are not good by facility and complaisance. "The kindness of kings consists in justice and strength." Easy good nature has been the dangerous foible of the Republic, and it was necessary that its enemies should outrage it, and drive us to unwonted firmness, to secure the salvation of this country in the next ages.

The ancients believed in a serene and beautiful Genius which ruled in the affairs of nations; which, with a slow but stern justice, carried forward the fortunes of certain chosen houses, weeding out single offenders or offending families, and securing at last the firm prosperity of the favorites of Heaven. It was too narrow a view of the Eternal Nemesis. There is a serene Providence which rules the fate of nations, which makes little account of time, little of one generation or race, makes no account of disasters, conquers alike by what is called defeat or by what is called victory, thrusts aside enemy and obstruction, crushes everything immoral as inhuman, and obtains the ultimate triumph of the best race by the sacrifice of everything which resists the moral laws of the world.[1] It makes its own instruments, creates the man for the time, trains him in poverty, inspires his genius, and

arms him for his task. It has given every race its own talent, and ordains that only that race which combines perfectly with the virtues of all shall endure.[1]

XVI

HARVARD COMMEMORATION SPEECH

JULY 21, 1865

"'Old classmate, say
Do you remember our Commencement Day?
Were we such boys as these at twenty?' Nay,
God called them to a nobler task than ours,
And gave them holier thoughts and manlier powers, —
This is the day of fruits and not of flowers!
These 'boys' we talk about like ancient sages
Are the same *men* we read of in old pages –
The bronze recast of dead heroic ages!
We grudge them not, our dearest, bravest, best, —
Let but the quarrel's issue stand confest:
'T is Earth's old slave-God battling for his crown
And Freedom fighting with her visor down."

HOLMES.

"Many loved Truth, and lavished life's best oil
Amid the dust of books to find her,
Content at last, for guerdon of their toil,
With the cast mantle she hath left behind her.
Many in sad faith sought for her,
Many with crossed hands sighed for her;
But these, our brothers, fought for her,
At life's dear peril wrought for her,
So loved her that they died for her,
Tasting the raptured fleetness
Of her divine completeness:
Their higher instinct knew
Those love her best who to themselves are true,
And what they dare to dream of, dare to do;
They followed her and found her
Where all may hope to find,
Not in the ashes of the burnt-out mind,
But beautiful, with danger's sweetness round her.
Where faith made whole with deed
Breathes its awakening breath
Into the lifeless creed,
They saw her plumed and mailed,
With sweet, stern face unveiled,
And all-repaying eyes, look proud on them in death."

Lowell, *Commemoration Ode.*

HARVARD COMMEMORATION SPEECH

MR. CHAIRMAN, AND GENTLEMEN: With whatever opinion we come here, I think it is not in man to see, without a feeling of pride and pleasure, a tried soldier, the armed defender of the right. I think that in these last years all opinions have been affected by the magnificent and stupendous spectacle which Divine Providence has offered us of the energies that slept in the children of this country, — that slept and have awakened. I see thankfully those that are here, but dim eyes in vain explore for some who are not.

The old Greek Heraclitus said, "War is the Father of all things." He said it, no doubt, as science, but we of this day can repeat it as political and social truth. War passes the power of all chemical solvents, breaking up the old adhesions, and allowing the atoms of society to take a new order. It is not the Government, but the War, that has appointed the good generals, sifted out the pedants, put in the new and vigorous blood. The War has lifted many other people besides Grant and Sherman into

their true places. Even Divine Providence, we may say, always seems to work after a certain military necessity. Every nation punishes the General who is not victorious. It is a rule in games of chance that the cards beat all the players, and revolutions disconcert and outwit all the insurgents.

The revolutions carry their own points, sometimes to the ruin of those who set them on foot. The proof that war also is within the highest right, is a marked benefactor in the hands of the Divine Providence, is its *morale*. The war gave back integrity to this erring and immoral nation. It charged with power, peaceful, amiable men, to whose life war and discord were abhorrent. What an infusion of character went out from this and other colleges! What an infusion of character down to the ranks! The experience has been uniform that it is the gentle soul that makes the firm hero after all. It is easy to recall the mood in which our young men, snatched from every peaceful pursuit, went to the war. Many of them had never handled a gun. They said, "It is not in me to resist. I go because I must. It is a duty which I shall never forgive myself if I decline. I do not know that I can make a soldier. I may be

very clumsy. Perhaps I shall be timid; but you can rely on me. Only one thing is certain, I can well die, but I cannot afford to misbehave."

In fact the infusion of culture and tender humanity from these scholars and idealists who went to the war in their own despite — God knows they had no fury for killing their old friends and countrymen — had its signal and lasting effect. It was found that enthusiasm was a more potent ally than science and munitions of war without it. "It is a principle of war," said Napoleon, "that when you can use the thunderbolt you must prefer it to the cannon." Enthusiasm was the thunderbolt. Here in this little Massachusetts, in smaller Rhode Island, in this little nest of New England republics it flamed out when the guilty gun was aimed at Sumter.

Mr. Chairman, standing here in Harvard College, the parent of all the colleges; in Massachusetts, the parent of all the North; when I consider her influence on the country as a principal planter of the Western States, and now, by her teachers, preachers, journalists and books, as well as by traffic and production, the diffuser of religious, literary and political opinion; — and when I see how irresistible

the convictions of Massachusetts are in these swarming populations, — I think the little state bigger than I knew. When her blood is up, she has a fist big enough to knock down an empire. And her blood was roused. Scholars changed the black coat for the blue. A single company in the Forty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment contained thirty-five sons of Harvard. You all know as well as I the story of these dedicated men, who knew well on what duty they went, — whose fathers and mothers said of each slaughtered son, "We gave him up when he enlisted." One mother said, when her son was offered the command of the first negro regiment, "If he accepts it, I shall be as proud as if I had heard that he was shot."[1] These men, thus tender, thus high-bred, thus peaceable, were always in the front and always employed. They might say, with their forefathers the old Norse Vikings, "We sung the mass of lances from morning until evening." And in how many cases it chanced, when the hero had fallen, they who came by night to his funeral, on the morrow returned to the war-path to show his slayers the way to death!

Ah! young brothers, all honor and gratitude to you, — you, manly defenders, Liberty's and

Humanity's bodyguard! We shall not again disparage America, now that we have seen what men it will bear. We see — we thank you for it — a new era, worth to mankind all the treasure and all the lives it has cost; yes, worth to the world the lives of all this generation of American men, if they had been demanded.[1]

XVII

ADDRESS

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE SOLDIERS' MONUMENT IN CONCORD, APRIL 19, 1867

"They have shown what men may do,
They have proved how men may die, —
Count, who can, the fields they have pressed,
Each face to the solemn sky!"

BROWNELL.

"THINK you these felt no charms
In their gray homesteads and embowered farms?
In household faces waiting at the door
Their evening step should lighten up no more?
In fields their boyish feet had known?
In trees their fathers' hands had set,
And which with them had grown,
Widening each year their leafy coronet?
Felt they no pang of passionate regret
For those unsolid goods that seem so much our own?
These things are dear to every man that lives,
And life prized more for what it lends than gives.
Yea, many a tie, through iteration sweet,
Strove to detain their fatal feet;
And yet the enduring half they chose,
Whose choice decides a man life's slave or king,
The invisible things of God before the seen and known:
Therefore their memory inspiration blows
With echoes gathering on from zone to zone;
For manhood is the one immortal thing
Beneath Time's changeful sky,
And, where it lightened once, from age to age,
Men come to learn, in grateful pilgrimage,
That length of days is knowing when to die."

LOWELL, *Concord Ode.*

ADDRESS

DEDICATION OF SOLDIERS' MONUMENT IN CONCORD, APRIL 19, 1867

FELLOW CITIZENS: The day is in Concord doubly our calendar day, as being the anniversary of the invasion of the town by the British troops in 1775, and of the departure of the company of volunteers for Washington, in 1861. We are all pretty well aware that the facts which make to us the interest of this day are in a great degree personal and local here; that every other town and city has its own heroes and memorial days, and that we can hardly expect a wide sympathy for the names and anecdotes which we delight to record. We are glad and proud that we have no monopoly of merit. We are thankful that other towns and cities are as rich; that the heroes of old and of recent date, who made and kept America free and united, were not rare or solitary growths, but sporadic over vast tracts of the Republic. Yet, as it is a piece of nature and the common sense that the throbbing chord that

holds us to our kindred, our friends and our town, is not to be denied or resisted, — no matter how frivolous or unphilosophical its pulses, — we shall cling affectionately to our houses, our river and pastures, and believe that our visitors will pardon us if we take the privilege of talking freely about our nearest neighbors as in a family party ; — well assured, meantime, that the virtues we are met to honor were directed on aims which command the sympathy of every loyal American citizen, were exerted for the protection of our common country, and aided its triumph.

The town has thought fit to signify its honor for a few of its sons by raising an obelisk in the square. It is a simple pile enough, — a few slabs of granite, dug just below the surface of the soil, and laid upon the top of it; but as we have learned that the upheaved mountain, from which these discs or flakes were broken, was once a glowing mass at white heat, slowly crystallized, then uplifted by the central fires of the globe : so the roots of the events it appropriately marks are in the heart of the universe. I shall say of this obelisk, planted here in our quiet plains, what Richter says of the volcano in the fair landscape of Naples : " Vesuvius stands in this poem

of Nature, and exalts everything, as war does the age."

The art of the architect and the sense of the town have made these dumb stones speak; have, if I may borrow the old language of the church, converted these elements from a secular to a sacred and spiritual use; have made them look to the past and the future; have given them a meaning for the imagination and the heart. The sense of the town, the eloquent inscriptions the shaft now bears, the memories of these martyrs, the noble names which yet have gathered only their first fame, whatever good grows to the country out of the war, the largest results, the future power and genius of the land, will go on clothing this shaft with daily beauty and spiritual life. 'T is certain that a plain stone like this, standing on such memories, having no reference to utilities, but only to the grand instincts of the civil and moral man, mixes with surrounding nature, — by day with the changing seasons, by night the stars roll over it gladly, — becomes a sentiment, a poet, a prophet, an orator, to every townsman and passenger, an altar where the noble youth shall in all time come to make his secret vows.[1]

The old Monument, a short half-mile from

this house, stands to signalize the first Revolution, where the people resisted offensive usurpations, offensive taxes of the British Parliament, claiming that there should be no tax without representation. Instructed by events, after the quarrel began, the Americans took higher ground, and stood for political independence. But in the necessities of the hour, they overlooked the moral law, and winked at a practical exception to the Bill of Rights they had drawn up. They winked at the exception, believing it insignificant. But the moral law, the nature of things, did not wink at it, but kept its eye wide open. It turned out that this one violation was a subtle poison, which in eighty years corrupted the whole overgrown body politic, and brought the alternative of extirpation of the poison or ruin to the Republic.[1]

This new Monument is built to mark the arrival of the nation at the new principle, — say, rather, at its new acknowledgment, for the principle is as old as Heaven, — that only that state can live, in which injury to the least member is recognized as damage to the whole.

Reform must begin at home. The aim of the hour was to reconstruct the South; but first the North had to be reconstructed. Its own

theory and practice of liberty had got sadly out of gear, and must be corrected. It was done on the instant. A thunder-storm at sea sometimes reverses the magnets in the ship, and south is north. The storm of war works the like miracle on men. Every Democrat who went South came back a Republican, like the governors who, in Buchanan's time, went to Kansas, and instantly took the free-state colors. War, says the poet, is

> "the arduous strife,
> To which the triumph of all good is given." [1]

Every principle is a war-note. When the rights of man are recited under any old government, every one of them is a declaration of war. War civilizes, rearranges the population, distributing by ideas, — the innovators on one side, the antiquaries on the other. It opens the eyes wider. Once we were patriots up to the town-bounds, or the state-line. But when you replace the love of family or clan by a principle, as freedom, instantly that fire runs over the state-line into New Hampshire, Vermont, New York and Ohio, into the prairie and beyond, leaps the mountains, bridges river and lake, burns as hotly in Kansas and California as in Boston, and no chemist can discriminate between

one soil and the other. It lifts every population to an equal power and merit.

As long as we debate in council, both sides may form their private guess what the event may be, or which is the strongest. But the moment you cry "Every man to his tent, O Israel!" the delusions of hope and fear are at an end; — the strength is now to be tested by the eternal facts. There will be no doubt more. The world is equal to itself. The secret architecture of things begins to disclose itself; the fact that all things were made on a basis of right; that justice is really desired by all intelligent beings; that opposition to it is against the nature of things; and that, whatever may happen in this hour or that, the years and the centuries are always pulling down the wrong and building up the right.

The war made the Divine Providence credible to many who did not believe the good Heaven quite honest. Every man was an abolitionist by conviction, but did not believe that his neighbor was. The opinions of masses of men, which the tactics of primary caucuses and the proverbial timidity of trade had concealed, the war discovered; and it was found, contrary to all popular belief, that the country was at

heart abolitionist, and for the Union was ready to die.

As cities of men are the first effects of civilization, and also instantly causes of more civilization, so armies, which are only wandering cities, generate a vast heat, and lift the spirit of the soldiers who compose them to the boiling point. The armies mustered in the North were as much missionaries to the mind of the country as they were carriers of material force, and had the vast advantage of carrying whither they marched a higher civilization. Of course, there are noble men everywhere, and there are such in the South; and the noble know the noble, wherever they meet; and we have all heard passages of generous and exceptional behavior exhibited by individuals there to our officers and men, during the war. But the common people, rich or poor, were the narrowest and most conceited of mankind, as arrogant as the negroes on the Gambia River; and, by the way, it looks as if the editors of the Southern press were in all times selected from this class. The invasion of Northern farmers, mechanics, engineers, tradesmen, lawyers and students did more than forty years of peace had done to educate the South. "This will be a slow business,"

writes our Concord captain home, " for we have to stop and civilize the people as we go along."

It is an interesting part of the history, the manner in which this incongruous militia were made soldiers. That was done again on the Kansas plan. Our farmers went to Kansas as peaceable, God-fearing men as the members of our school committee here. But when the Border raids were let loose on their villages, these people, who turned pale at home if called to dress a cut finger, on witnessing the butchery done by the Missouri riders on women and babes, were so beside themselves with rage, that they became on the instant the bravest soldiers and the most determined avengers.[1] And the first events of the war of the Rebellion gave the like training to the new recruits.

All sorts of men went to the war, — the roughs, men who liked harsh play and violence, men for whom pleasure was not strong enough, but who wanted pain, and found sphere at last for their superabundant energy ; then the adventurous type of New Englander, with his appetite for novelty and travel ; the village politician, who could now verify his newspaper knowledge, see the South, and amass what a stock of adventures to retail hereafter at the

fireside, or to the well-known companions on the Mill-dam ; young men, also, of excellent education and polished manners, delicately brought up ; manly farmers, skilful mechanics, young tradesmen, men hitherto of narrow opportunities of knowing the world, but well taught in the grammar-schools. But perhaps in every one of these classes were idealists, men who went from a religious duty. I have a note of a conversation that occurred in our first company, the morning before the battle of Bull Run. At a halt in the march, a few of our boys were sitting on a rail fence talking together whether it was right to sacrifice themselves. One of them said, 'he had been thinking a good deal about it, last night, and he thought one was never too young to die for a principle.' One of our later volunteers, on the day when he left home, in reply to my question, How can you be spared from your farm, now that your father is so ill? said : " I go because I shall always be sorry if I did not go when the country called me. I can go as well as another." One wrote to his father these words : " You may think it strange that I, who have always naturally rather shrunk from danger, should wish to enter the army ; but there is a higher Power that tunes the

hearts of men, and enables them to see their duty, and gives them courage to face the dangers with which those duties are attended." And the captain writes home of another of his men, "B—— comes from a sense of duty and love of country, and these are the soldiers you can depend upon." [1]

None of us can have forgotten how sharp a test to try our peaceful people with, was the first call for troops. I doubt not many of our soldiers could repeat the confession of a youth whom I knew in the beginning of the war, who enlisted in New York, went to the field, and died early. Before his departure he confided to his sister that he was naturally a coward, but was determined that no one should ever find it out; that he had long trained himself by forcing himself, on the suspicion of any near danger, to go directly up to it, cost him what struggles it might. Yet it is from this temperament of sensibility that great heroes have been formed.

Our first company was led by an officer who had grown up in this village from a boy.[2] The older among us can well remember him at school, at play and at work, all the way up, the most amiable, sensible, unpretending of men; fair, blond, the rose lived long in his cheek;

grave, but social, and one of the last men in this town you would have picked out for the rough dealing of war, — not a trace of fierceness, much less of recklessness, or of the devouring thirst for excitement; tender as a woman in his care for a cough or a chilblain in his men; had troches and arnica in his pocket for them. The army officers were welcome to their jest on him as too kind for a captain, and, later, as the colonel who got off his horse when he saw one of his men limp on the march, and told him to ride. But *he* knew that his men had found out, first that he was captain, then that he was colonel, and neither dared nor wished to disobey him. He was a man without conceit, who never fancied himself a philosopher or a saint; the most modest and amiable of men, engaged in common duties, but equal always to the occasion; and the war showed him still equal, however stern and terrible the occasion grew, — disclosed in him a strong good sense, great fertility of resource, the helping hand, and then the moral qualities of a commander, — a patience not to be tired out, a serious devotion to the cause of the country that never swerved, a hope that never failed. He was a Puritan in the army, with traits that remind one of John

Brown, — an integrity incorruptible, and an ability that always rose to the need.

You will remember that these colonels, captains and lieutenants, and the privates too, are domestic men, just wrenched away from their families and their business by this rally of all the manhood in the land. They have notes to pay at home; have farms, shops, factories, affairs of every kind to think of and write home about. Consider what sacrifice and havoc in business arrangements this war-blast made. They have to think carefully of every last resource at home on which their wives or mothers may fall back; upon the little account in the savings bank, the grass that can be sold, the old cow, or the heifer. These necessities make the topics of the ten thousand letters with which the mail-bags came loaded day by day. These letters play a great part in the war. The writing of letters made the Sunday in every camp: — meantime they are without the means of writing. After the first marches there is no letter-paper, there are no envelopes, no postage-stamps, for these were wetted into a solid mass in the rains and mud. Some of these letters are written on the back of old bills, some on brown paper, or strips of newspaper; written by fire-

light, making the short night shorter; written on the knee, in the mud, with pencil, six words at a time; or in the saddle, and have to stop because the horse will not stand still. But the words are proud and tender, — "Tell mother I will not disgrace her;" "tell her not to worry about me, for I know she would not have had me stay at home if she could as well as not." The letters of the captain are the dearest treasures of this town. Always devoted, sometimes anxious, sometimes full of joy at the deportment of his comrades, they contain the sincere praise of men whom I now see in this assembly. If Marshal Montluc's[1] Memoirs are the Bible of soldiers, as Henry IV. of France said, Colonel Prescott might furnish the Book of Epistles.

He writes, "You don't know how one gets attached to a company by living with them and sleeping with them all the time. I know every man by heart. I know every man's weak spot, — who is shaky, and who is true blue." He never remits his care of the men, aiming to hold them to their good habits and to keep them cheerful. For the first point, he keeps up a constant acquaintance with them; urges their correspondence with their friends; writes news

of them home, urging his own correspondent to visit their families and keep them informed about the men ; encourages a temperance society which is formed in the camp. "I have not had a man drunk, or affected by liquor, since we came here." At one time he finds his company unfortunate in having fallen between two companies of quite another class, — "'t is profanity all the time ; yet instead of a bad influence on our men, I think it works the other way, — it disgusts them."

One day he writes, "I expect to have a time, this forenoon, with the officer from West Point who drills us. He is very profane, and I will not stand it. If he does not stop it, I shall march my men right away when he is drilling them. There is a fine for officers swearing in the army, and I have too many young men that are not used to such talk. I told the colonel this morning I should do it, and shall, — don't care what the consequence is. This lieutenant seems to think that these men, who never saw a gun, can drill as well as he, who has been at West Point four years." At night he adds : "I told that officer from West Point, this morning, that he could not swear at my company as he did yesterday ; told him I would not stand it anyway. I told

him I had a good many young men in my company whose mothers asked me to look after them, and I should do so, and not allow them to hear such language, especially from an officer, whose duty it was to set them a better example. Told him I did not swear myself and would not allow him to. He looked at me as much as to say, *Do you know whom you are talking to?* and I looked at him as much as to say, *Yes, I do.* He looked rather ashamed, but went through the drill without an oath." So much for the care of their morals. His next point is to keep them cheerful. 'T is better than medicine. He has games of baseball, and pitching quoits, and euchre, whilst part of the military discipline is sham fights.

The best men heartily second him, and invent excellent means of their own. When, afterwards, five of these men were prisoners in the Parish Prison in New Orleans, they set themselves to use the time to the wisest advantage, — formed a debating-club, wrote a daily or weekly newspaper, called it "Stars and Stripes." It advertises, "prayer-meeting at 7 o'clock, in cell No. 8, second floor," and their own printed record is a proud and affecting narrative.

Whilst the regiment was encamped at Camp

Andrew, near Alexandria, in June, 1861, marching orders came. Colonel Lawrence sent for eight wagons, but only three came. On these they loaded all the canvas of the tents, but took no tent-poles.

"It looked very much like a severe thunder-storm," writes the captain, "and I knew the men would all have to sleep out of doors, unless we carried them. So I took six poles, and went to the colonel, and told him I had got the poles for two tents, which would cover twenty-four men, and unless he ordered me not to carry them, I should do so. He said he had no objection, only thought they would be too much for me. We only had about twelve men [the rest of the company being, perhaps, on picket or other duty], and some of them have their heavy knapsacks and guns to carry, so could not carry any poles. We started and marched two miles without stopping to rest, not having had anything to eat, and being very hot and dry." At this time Captain Prescott was daily threatened with sickness, and suffered the more from this heat. "I told Lieutenant Bowers, this morning, that I could afford to be sick from bringing the tent-poles, for it saved the whole regiment from sleeping out-doors; for they would not have thought of it, if

I had not taken mine. The major had tried to discourage me; — said, 'perhaps, if I carried them over, some other company would get them;' — I told him, perhaps he did not think I was smart." He had the satisfaction to see the whole regiment enjoying the protection of these tents.[1]

In the disastrous battle of Bull Run this company behaved well, and the regimental officers believed, what is now the general conviction of the country, that the misfortunes of the day were not so much owing to the fault of the troops as to the insufficiency of the combinations by the general officers. It happened, also, that the Fifth Massachusetts was almost unofficered. The colonel was, early in the day, disabled by a casualty; the lieutenant-colonel, the major and the adjutant were already transferred to new regiments, and their places were not yet filled. The three months of the enlistment expired a few days after the battle.

In the fall of 1861, the old artillery company of this town was reorganized, and Captain Richard Barrett received a commission in March, 1862, from the state, as its commander. This company, chiefly recruited here, was later embodied in the Forty-seventh Regiment, Massa-

chusetts Volunteers, enlisted as nine months' men, and sent to New Orleans, where they were employed in guard duty during their term of service. Captain Humphrey H. Buttrick, lieutenant in this regiment, as he had been already lieutenant in Captain Prescott's company in 1861, went out again in August, 1864, a captain in the Fifty-ninth Massachusetts, and saw hard service in the Ninth Corps, under General Burnside. The regiment being formed of veterans, and in fields requiring great activity and exposure, suffered extraordinary losses ; Captain Buttrick and one other officer being the only officers in it who were neither killed, wounded nor captured.[1] In August, 1862, on the new requisition for troops, when it was becoming difficult to meet the draft, — mainly through the personal example and influence of Mr. Sylvester Lovejoy, twelve men, including himself, were enlisted for three years, and, being soon after enrolled in the Fortieth Massachusetts, went to the war; and a very good account has been heard, not only of the regiment, but of the talents and virtues of these men.

After the return of the three months' company to Concord, in 1861, Captain Prescott raised a new company of volunteers, and Cap-

tain Bowers another. Each of these companies included recruits from this town, and they formed part of the Thirty-second Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers. Enlisting for three years, and remaining to the end of the war, these troops saw every variety of hard service which the war offered, and, though suffering at first some disadvantage from change of commanders, and from severe losses, they grew at last, under the command of Colonel Prescott, to an excellent reputation, attested by the names of the thirty battles they were authorized to inscribe on their flag, and by the important position usually assigned them in the field.

I have found many notes of their rough experience in the march and in the field. In McClellan's retreat in the Peninsula, in July, 1862, "it is all our men can do to draw their feet out of the mud. We marched one mile through mud, without exaggeration, one foot deep, — a good deal of the way over my boots, and with short rations; on one day nothing but liver, blackberries, and pennyroyal tea."— "At Fredericksburg we lay eleven hours in one spot without moving, except to rise and fire." The next note is, "cracker for a day and

a half, — but all right." Another day, "had not left the ranks for thirty hours, and the nights were broken by frequent alarms. How would Concord people," he asks, "like to pass the night on the battle-field, and hear the dying cry for help, and not be able to go to them?" But the regiment did good service at Harrison's Landing, and at Antietam, under Colonel Parker; and at Fredericksburg, in December, Lieutenant-Colonel Prescott loudly expressed his satisfaction at his comrades, now and then particularizing names: "Bowers, Shepard and Lauriat are as brave as lions." [1]

At the battle of Gettysburg, in July, 1863, the brigade of which the Thirty-second Regiment formed a part, was in line of battle seventy-two hours, and suffered severely. Colonel Prescott's regiment went in with two hundred and ten men, nineteen officers. On the second of July they had to cross the famous wheat-field, under fire from the rebels in front and on both flanks. Seventy men were killed or wounded out of seven companies. Here Francis Buttrick, whose manly beauty all of us remember,[2] and Sergeant Appleton, an excellent soldier, were fatally wounded. The Colonel was hit by three bullets. "I feel," he writes,

"I have much to be thankful for that my life is spared, although I would willingly die to have the regiment do as well as they have done. Our colors had several holes made, and were badly torn. One bullet hit the staff which the bearer had in his hand. The color-bearer is brave as a lion; he will go anywhere you say, and no questions asked; his name is Marshall Davis." The Colonel took evident pleasure in the fact that he could account for all his men. There were so many killed, so many wounded, — but no missing. For that word "missing" was apt to mean skulking. Another incident: "A friend of Lieutenant Barrow complains that we did not treat his body with respect, inasmuch as we did not send it home. I think we were very fortunate to save it at all, for in ten minutes after he was killed the rebels occupied the ground, and we had to carry him and all our wounded nearly two miles in blankets. There was no place nearer than Baltimore where we could have got a coffin, and I suppose it was eighty miles there. We laid him in two double blankets, and then sent off a long distance and got boards off a barn to make the best coffin we could, and gave him burial."

After Gettysburg, Colonel Prescott remarks

that our regiment is highly complimented. When Colonel Gurney, of the Ninth, came to him the next day to tell him that "folks are just beginning to appreciate the Thirty-second Regiment: it always was a good regiment, and people are just beginning to find it out;" Colonel Prescott notes in his journal, — "Pity they have not found it out before it was all gone. We have a hundred and seventy-seven guns this morning."

Let me add an extract from the official report of the brigade commander: "Word was sent by General Barnes, that, when we retired, we should fall back under cover of the woods. This order was communicated to Colonel Prescott, whose regiment was then under the hottest fire. Understanding it to be a peremptory order to retire then, he replied, 'I don't want to retire; I am not ready to retire; I can hold this place;' and he made good his assertion. Being informed that he misunderstood the order, which was only to inform him how to retire when it became necessary, he was satisfied, and he and his command held their ground manfully." It was said that Colonel Prescott's reply, when reported, pleased the Acting-Brigadier-General Sweitzer mightily.

After Gettysburg, the Thirty-second Regiment saw hard service at Rappahannock Station; and at Baltimore, in Virginia, where they were drawn up in battle order for ten days successively: crossing the Rapidan, and suffering from such extreme cold, a few days later, at Mine Run, that the men were compelled to break rank and run in circles to keep themselves from being frozen. On the third of December, they went into winter quarters.

I must not follow the multiplied details that make the hard work of the next year. But the campaign in the Wilderness surpassed all their worst experience hitherto of the soldier's life. On the third of May, they crossed the Rapidan for the fifth time. On the twelfth, at Laurel Hill, the regiment had twenty-one killed and seventy-five wounded, including five officers. "The regiment has been in the front and centre since the battle begun, eight and a half days ago, and is now building breastworks on the Fredericksburg road. This has been the hardest fight the world ever knew. I think the loss of our army will be forty thousand. Every day, for the last eight days, there has been a terrible battle the whole length of the line. One day they drove us; but it has been regular bull-dog fight-

ing." On the twenty-first, they had been, for seventeen days and nights, under arms without rest. On the twenty-third, they crossed the North Anna, and achieved a great success. On the thirtieth, we learn, "Our regiment has never been in the second line since we crossed the Rapidan, on the third." On the night of the thirtieth, — "The hardest day we ever had. We have been in the first line twenty-six days, and fighting every day but two; whilst your newspapers talk of the inactivity of the Army of the Potomac. If those writers could be here and fight all day, and sleep in the trenches, and be called up several times in the night by picket-firing, they would not call it inactive." June fourth is marked in the diary as "An awful day; — two hundred men lost to the command;" and not until the fifth of June comes at last a respite for a short space, during which the men drew shoes and socks, and the officers were able to send to the wagons and procure a change of clothes, for the first time in five weeks.

But from these incessant labors there was now to be rest for one head, — the honored and beloved commander of the regiment. On the sixteenth of June, they crossed the James River, and marched to within three miles of Petersburg

Early in the morning of the eighteenth they went to the front, formed line of battle, and were ordered to take the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad from the rebels. In this charge, Colonel George L. Prescott was mortally wounded. After driving the enemy from the railroad, crossing it, and climbing the farther bank to continue the charge, he was struck, in front of his command, by a musket-ball which entered his breast near the heart. He was carried off the field to the division hospital, and died on the following morning. On his death-bed, he received the needless assurances of his general that "he had done more than all his duty," — needless to a conscience so faithful and unspotted. One of his townsmen and comrades, a sergeant in his regiment, writing to his own family, uses these words: "He was one of the few men who fight for principle. He did not fight for glory, honor, nor money, but because he thought it his duty. These are not my feelings only, but of the whole regiment."

On the first of January, 1865, the Thirty-second Regiment made itself comfortable in log huts, a mile south of our rear line of works before Petersburg. On the fourth of February, sudden orders came to move next morning at

daylight. At Dabney's Mills, in a sharp fight, they lost seventy-four in killed, wounded and missing. Here Major Shepard was taken prisoner. The lines were held until the tenth, with more than usual suffering from snow and hail and intense cold, added to the annoyance of the artillery fire. On the first of April, the regiment connected with Sheridan's cavalry, near the Five Forks, and took an important part in that battle which opened Petersburg and Richmond, and forced the surrender of Lee. On the ninth, they marched in support of the cavalry, and were advancing in a grand charge, when the white flag of General Lee appeared. The brigade of which the Thirty-second Regiment formed part was detailed to receive the formal surrender of the rebel arms. The homeward march began on the thirteenth, and the regiment was mustered out in the field, at Washington, on the twenty-eighth of June, and arrived in Boston on the first of July.

Fellow citizens: The obelisk records only the names of the dead. There is something partial in this distribution of honor. Those who went through those dreadful fields and returned not deserve much more than all the honor we can

pay. But those also who went through the same fields, and returned alive, put just as much at hazard as those who died, and, in other countries, would wear distinctive badges of honor as long as they lived. I hope the disuse of such medals or badges in this country only signifies that everybody knows these men, and carries their deeds in such lively remembrance that they require no badge or reminder. I am sure I need not bespeak your gratitude to these fellow citizens and neighbors of ours. I hope they will be content with the laurels of one war.

But let me, in behalf of this assembly, speak directly to you, our defenders, and say, that it is easy to see that if danger should ever threaten the homes which you guard, the knowledge of your presence will be a wall of fire for their protection. Brave men! you will hardly be called to see again fields as terrible as those you have already trampled with your victories.

There are people who can hardly read the names on yonder bronze tablet, the mist so gathers in their eyes. Three of the names are of sons of one family.[1] A gloom gathers on this assembly, composed as it is of kindred men and women, for, in many houses, the dearest and noblest is gone from their hearth-stone. Yet it

is tinged with light from heaven. A duty so severe has been discharged, and with such immense results of good, lifting private sacrifice to the sublime, that, though the cannon volleys have a sound of funeral echoes, they can yet hear through them the benedictions of their country and mankind.

APPENDIX

In the above Address I have been compelled to suppress more details of personal interest than I have used. But I do not like to omit the testimony to the character of the Commander of the Thirty-second Massachusetts Regiment, given in the following letter by one of his soldiers: —

Near Petersburg, Virginia,
June 20, 1864.

Dear Father:

With feelings of deep regret, I inform you that Colonel Prescott, our brave and lamented leader, is no more. He was shot through the body, near the heart, on the eighteenth day of June, and died the following morning. On the morning of the eighteenth, our division was not in line. Reveille was at an early hour,

and before long we were moving to the front. Soon we passed the ground where the Ninth Corps drove the enemy from their fortified lines, and came upon and formed our line in rear of Crawford's Division. In front of us, and one mile distant, the Rebels' lines of works could be seen. Between us and them, and in a deep gulley, was the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad. Soon the order came for us to take the railroad from the enemy, whose advance then held it. Four regiments of our brigade were to head the charge; so the 32d Massachusetts, 62d, 91st and 155th Pennsylvania regiments, under command of Colonel Gregory, moved forward in good order, the enemy keeping up a steady fire all the time. All went well till we reached the road. The Rebels left when they saw us advance, and, when we reached the road, they were running away. But here our troubles began. The banks, on each side of the road, were about thirty feet high, and being stiff clay, were nearly perpendicular. We got down well enough, because we got started, and were rolled to the bottom, a confused pile of Yanks. Now to climb the other side! It was impossible to get up by climbing, for the side of it was like the side of a house. By dint of getting on each other's shoulders and making holes for our feet with bayonets, a few of us got up; reaching our guns down to the others, we all finally got over. Meanwhile, a storm of bullets was rained upon us. Through it all, Colonel Prescott was cool and collected, encouraging the men

to do their best. After we were almost all across, he moved out in front of the line, and called the men out to him, saying, "Come on, men; form our line here." The color-bearer stepped towards him, when a bullet struck the Colonel, passed through him, and wounded the color-bearer, Sergeant Giles of Company G. Calmly the Colonel turned, and said, "I am wounded; some one help me off." A sergeant of Company B, and one of the 21st Pennsylvania, helped him off. This man told me, last night, all that the Colonel said, while going off. He was afraid we would be driven back, and wanted these men to stick by him. He said, "I die for my country." He seemed to be conscious that death was near to him, and said the wound was near his heart; wanted the sergeant of Company B to write to his family, and tell them all about him. He will write to Mrs. Prescott, probably; but if they do not hear from some one an account of his death, I wish you would show this to Mrs. Prescott. He died in the division hospital, night before last, and his remains will probably be sent to Concord. We lament his loss in the regiment very much. He was like a father to us, — always counselling us to be firm in the path of duty, and setting the example himself. I think a more moral man, or one more likely to enter the kingdom of heaven, cannot be found in the Army of the Potomac. No man ever heard him swear, or saw him use liquor, since we were in the service. I wish there was some way for the regiment to pay some

tribute to his memory. But the folks at home must do this for the present. The Thirty-second Regiment has lost its leader, and calls on the people of Concord to console the afflicted family of the brave departed, by showing their esteem for him in some manner. He was one of the few men who fight for principle, — pure principle. He did not fight for glory, honor nor money but because he thought it his duty. These are not my feelings only, but of the whole regiment. I want you to show this to every one, so they can see what we thought of the Colonel, and how he died in front of his regiment. God bless and comfort his poor family. Perhaps people think soldiers have no feeling, but it is not so. We feel deep anxiety for the families of all our dear comrades.

CHARLES BARTLETT,
Sergeant Company G, 32d Mass. Vols.[1]

XVIII

EDITORS' ADDRESS

MASSACHUSETTS QUARTERLY REVIEW, DECEMBER, 1847

The old men studied magic in the flowers,
And human fortunes in astronomy,
And an omnipotence in chemistry,
Preferring things to names, for these were men,
Were unitarians of the united world,
And, wheresoever their clear eye-beams fell,
They caught the footsteps of the Same. Our eyes
Are armed, but we are strangers to the stars,
And strangers to the mystic beast and bird,
And strangers to the plant and to the mine.
The injured elements say, 'Not in us;'
And night and day, ocean and continent,
Fire, plant and mineral say, 'Not in us;'
And haughtily return us stare for stare.
For we invade them impiously for gain;
We devastate them unreligiously,
And coldly ask their pottage, not their love.
Therefore they shove us from them, yield to us
Only what to our griping toil is due;
But the sweet affluence of love and song,
The rich results of the divine consents
Of man and earth, of world beloved and loved,
The nectar and ambrosia are withheld.

EDITORS' ADDRESS

THE American people are fast opening their own destiny. The material basis is of such extent that no folly of man can quite subvert it; for the territory is a considerable fraction of the planet, and the population neither loath nor inexpert to use their advantages. Add, that this energetic race derive an unprecedented material power from the new arts, from the expansions effected by public schools, cheap postage and a cheap press, from the telescope, the telegraph, the railroad, steamship, steam-ferry, steam-mill; from domestic architecture, chemical agriculture, from ventilation, from ice, ether, caoutchouc, and innumerable inventions and manufactures.

A scholar who has been reading of the fabulous magnificence of Assyria and Persia, of Rome and Constantinople, leaves his library and takes his seat in a railroad-car, where he is importuned by newsboys with journals still wet from Liverpool and Havre, with telegraphic despatches not yet fifty minutes old from Buffalo and Cincinnati. At the screams of the steam-whistle, the train quits city and suburbs,

darts away into the interior, drops every man at his estate as it whirls along, and shows our traveller what tens of thousands of powerful and weaponed men, science-armed and society-armed, sit at large in this ample region, obscure from their numbers and the extent of the domain. He reflects on the power which each of these plain republicans can employ; how far these chains of intercourse and travel reach, interlock and ramify; what levers, what pumps, what exhaustive analyses are applied to Nature for the benefit of masses of men. Then he exclaims, What a negro-fine royalty is that of Jamschid and Solomon! What a substantial sovereignty does my townsman possess! A man who has a hundred dollars to dispose of — a hundred dollars over his bread — is rich beyond the dreams of the Cæsars.

Keep our eyes as long as we can on this picture, we cannot stave off the ulterior question, — the famous question of Cineas to Pyrrhus,[1] — the WHERE TO of all this power and population, these surveys and inventions, this taxing and tabulating, mill-privilege, roads, and mines. The aspect this country presents is a certain maniacal activity, an immense apparatus of cunning machinery which turns out, at last,

some Nuremberg toys. Has it generated, as great interests do, any intellectual power? Where are the works of the imagination — the surest test of a national genius? At least as far as the purpose and genius of America is yet reported in any book, it is a sterility and no genius.

One would say there is nothing colossal in the country but its geography and its material activities; that the moral and intellectual effects are not on the same scale with the trade and production. There is no speech heard but that of auctioneers, newsboys, and the caucus. Where is the great breath of the New World, the voice of aboriginal nations opening new eras with hymns of lofty cheer? Our books and fine arts are imitations; there is a fatal incuriosity and disinclination in our educated men to new studies and the interrogation of Nature. We have taste, critical talent, good professors, good commentators, but a lack of male energy. What more serious calamity can befall a people than a constitutional dulness and limitation? The moral influence of the intellect is wanting. We hearken in vain for any profound voice speaking to the American heart, cheering timid good men, animating the youth, consoling the

defeated, and intelligently announcing duties which clothe life with joy, and endear the face of land and sea to men.' It is a poor consideration that the country wit is precocious, and, as we say, practical; that political interests on so broad a scale as ours are administered by little men with some saucy village talent, by deft partisans, good cipherers; strict economists, quite empty of all superstition.

Conceding these unfavorable appearances, it would yet be a poor pedantry to read the fates of this country from these narrow data. On the contrary, we are persuaded that moral and material values are always commensurate. Every material organization exists to a moral end, which makes the reason of its existence. Here are no books, but who can see the continent with its inland and surrounding waters, its temperate climates, its west-wind breathing vigor through all the year, its confluence of races so favorable to the highest energy, and the infinite glut of their production, without putting new queries to Destiny as to the purpose for which this muster of nations and this sudden creation of enormous values is made?

This is equally the view of science and of patriotism. We hesitate to employ a word so

much abused as *patriotism*, whose true sense is almost the reverse of its popular sense. We have no sympathy with that boyish egotism, hoarse with cheering for one side, for one state, for one town: the right patriotism consists in the delight which springs from contributing our peculiar and legitimate advantages to the benefit of humanity. Every foot of soil has its proper quality; the grape on two sides of the same fence has new flavors; and so every acre on the globe, every family of men, every point of climate, has its distinguishing virtues. Certainly then this country does not lie here in the sun causeless; and though it may not be easy to define its influence, men feel already its emancipating quality in the careless self-reliance of the manners, in the freedom of thought, in the direct roads by which grievances are reached and redressed, and even in the reckless and sinister politics, not less than in purer expressions. Bad as it is, this freedom leads onward and upward, — to a Columbia of thought and art, which is the last and endless end of Columbus's adventure.

Lovers of our country, but not always approvers of the public counsels, we should certainly be glad to give good advice in politics. We have not

been able to escape our national and endemic habit, and to be liberated from interest in the elections and in public affairs. Nor have we cared to disfranchise ourselves. We are more solicitous than others to make our politics clear and healthful, as we believe politics to be nowise accidental or exceptional, but subject to the same laws with trees, earths and acids. We see that reckless and destructive fury which characterizes the lower classes of American society, and which is pampered by hundreds of profligate presses. The young intriguers who drive in bar-rooms and town-meetings the trade of politics, sagacious only to seize the victorious side, have put the country into the position of an overgrown bully, and Massachusetts finds no heart or head to give weight and efficacy to her contrary judgment. In hours when it seemed only to need one just word from a man of honor to have vindicated the rights of millions, and to have given a true direction to the first steps of a nation, we have seen the best understandings of New England, the trusted leaders of her counsels, constituting a snivelling and despised opposition, clapped on the back by comfortable capitalists from all sections, and persuaded to say, We are too old to stand for what is called a New England

sentiment any longer. Rely on us for commercial representatives, but for questions of ethics, — who knows what markets may be opened? We are not well, we are not in our seats, when justice and humanity are to be spoken for.

We have a bad war, many victories, each of which converts the country into an immense chanticleer; and a very insincere political opposition.[1] The country needs to be extricated from its delirium at once. Public affairs are chained in the same law with private; the retributions of armed states are not less sure and signal than those which come to private felons. The facility of majorities is no protection from the natural sequence of their own acts. Men reason badly, but Nature and Destiny are logical.[2]

But, whilst we should think our pains well bestowed if we could cure the infatuation of statesmen, and should be sincerely pleased if we could give a direction to the Federal politics, we are far from believing politics the primal interest of men. On the contrary, we hold that the laws and governors cannot possess a commanding interest for any but vacant or fanatical people; for the reason that this is simply a formal and superficial interest; and men of a solid genius are only interested in substantial things.

The State, like the individual, should rest on an ideal basis. Not only man but Nature is injured by the imputation that man exists only to be fattened with bread, but he lives in such connection with Thought and Fact that his bread is surely involved as one element thereof, but is not its end and aim. So the insight which commands the laws and conditions of the true polity precludes forever all interest in the squabbles of parties. As soon as men have tasted the enjoyment of learning, friendship and virtue, for which the State exists, the prizes of office appear polluted, and their followers outcasts.

A journal that would meet the real wants of this time must have a courage and power sufficient to solve the problems which the great groping society around us, stupid with perplexity, is dumbly exploring. Let it now show its astuteness by dodging each difficult question and arguing diffusely every point on which men are long ago unanimous. Can it front this matter of Socialism, to which the names of Owen and Fourier have attached, and dispose of that question? Will it cope with the allied questions of Government, Nonresistance, and all that belongs under that category? Will it measure itself with the chapter on Slavery, in some sort the special

enigma of the time, as it has provoked against it a sort of inspiration and enthusiasm singular in modern history? There are literary and philosophical reputations to settle. The name of Swedenborg has in this very time acquired new honors, and the current year has witnessed the appearance, in their first English translation, of his manuscripts. Here is an unsettled account in the book of Fame; a nebula to dim eyes, but which great telescopes may yet resolve into a magnificent system. Here is the standing problem of Natural Science, and the merits of her great interpreters to be determined; the encyclopædical Humboldt, and the intrepid generalizations collected by the author of the Vestiges of Creation. Here is the balance to be adjusted between the exact French school of Cuvier, and the genial catholic theorists, Geoffroy St.-Hilaire, Goethe, Davy and Agassiz. Will it venture into the thin and difficult air of that school where the secrets of structure are discussed under the topics of mesmerism and the twilights of demonology?

What will easily seem to many a far higher question than any other is that which respects the embodying of the Conscience of the period. Is the age we live in unfriendly to the highest powers; to that blending of the affections with

the poetic faculty which has distinguished the Religious Ages? We have a better opinion of the economy of Nature than to fear that those varying phases which humanity presents ever leave out any of the grand springs of human action. Mankind for the moment seem to be in search of a religion. The Jewish *cultus* is declining; the Divine, or, as some will say, the truly Human, hovers, now seen, now unseen, before us. This period of peace, this hour when the jangle of contending churches is hushing or hushed, will seem only the more propitious to those who believe that man need not fear the want of religion, because they know his religious constitution, — that he must rest on the moral and religious sentiments, as the motion of bodies rests on geometry. In the rapid decay of what was called religion, timid and unthinking people fancy a decay of the hope of man. But the moral and religious sentiments meet us everywhere, alike in markets as in churches. A God starts up behind cotton bales also. The conscience of man is regenerated as is the atmosphere, so that society cannot be debauched. The health which we call Virtue is an equipoise which easily redresses itself, and resembles those rocking stones which a child's finger can

move, and a weight of many hundred tons cannot overthrow.

With these convictions, a few friends of good letters have thought fit to associate themselves for the conduct of a new journal. We have obeyed the custom and convenience of the time in adopting this form of a Review, as a mould into which all metal most easily runs. But the form shall not be suffered to be an impediment. The name might convey the impression of a book of criticism, and that nothing is to be found here which was not written expressly for the Review; but good readers know that inspired pages are not written to fill a space, but for inevitable utterance; and to such our journal is freely and solicitously open, even though everything else be excluded. We entreat the aid of every lover of truth and right, and let these principles entreat for us. We rely on the talents and industry of good men known to us, but much more on the magnetism of truth, which is multiplying and educating advocates for itself and friends for us. We rely on the truth for and against ourselves.

XIX

ADDRESS TO KOSSUTH

AT CONCORD, MAY 11, 1852

God said, I am tired of kings,
I suffer them no more;
Up to my ear the morning brings
The outrage of the poor.

My angel, — his name is Freedom, —
Choose him to be your king;
He shall cut pathways east and west,
And fend you with his wing.

ADDRESS TO KOSSUTH

SIR, — The fatigue of your many public visits, in such unbroken succession as may compare with the toils of a campaign, forbid us to detain you long. The people of this town share with their countrymen the admiration of valor and perseverance; they, like their compatriots, have been hungry to see the man whose extraordinary eloquence is seconded by the splendor and the solidity of his actions. But, as it is the privilege of the people of this town to keep a hallowed mound which has a place in the story of the country; as Concord is one of the monuments of freedom; we knew beforehand that you could not go by us; you could not take all your steps in the pilgrimage of American liberty, until you had seen with your eyes the ruins of the bridge where a handful of brave farmers opened our Revolution. Therefore, we sat and waited for you.

And now, Sir, we are heartily glad to see you, at last, in these fields. We set no more value than you do on cheers and huzzas. But we think that the graves of our heroes around us throb to-day to a footstep that sounded like their own: —

"The mighty tread
Brings from the dust the sound of liberty." [1]

Sir, we have watched with attention your progress through the land, and the varying feeling with which you have been received, and the unvarying tone and countenance which you have maintained. We wish to discriminate in our regard. We wish to reserve our honor for actions of the noblest strain. We please ourselves that in you we meet one whose temper was long since tried in the fire, and made equal to all events; a man so truly in love with the greatest future, that he cannot be diverted to any less.

It is our republican doctrine, too, that the wide variety of opinions is an advantage. I believe I may say of the people of this country at large, that their sympathy is more worth, because it stands the test of party. It is not a blind wave; it is a living soul contending with living souls. It is, in every expression, antagonized. No opinion will pass but must stand the tug of war. As you see, the love you win is worth something; for it has been argued through; its foundation searched; it has proved sound and whole; it may be avowed; it will last, and it will draw all opinion to itself.

We have seen, with great pleasure, that there is nothing accidental in your attitude. We have seen that you are organically in that cause you plead. The man of Freedom, you are also the man of Fate. You do not elect, but you are elected by God and your genius to the task. We do not, therefore, affect to thank you. We only see in you the angel of freedom, crossing sea and land; crossing parties, nationalities, private interests and self-esteems; dividing populations where you go, and drawing to your part only the good. We are afraid that you are growing popular, Sir; you may be called to the dangers of prosperity. But, hitherto, you have had in all centuries and in all parties only the men of heart. I do not know but you will have the million yet. Then, may your strength be equal to your day. But remember, Sir, that everything great and excellent in the world is in minorities.[1]

Far be from us, Sir, any tone of patronage; we ought rather to ask yours. We know the austere condition of liberty — that it must be reconquered over and over again; yea, day by day; that it is a state of war; that it is always slipping from those who boast it to those who fight for it: and you, the foremost soldier of

freedom in this age,— it is for us to crave your judgment; who are we that we should dictate to you? You have won your own. We only affirm it. This country of workingmen greets in you a worker. This republic greets in you a republican. We only say, 'Well done, good and faithful.' — You have earned your own nobility at home. We admit you *ad eundem* (as they say at College). We admit you to the same degree, without new trial. We suspend all rules before so paramount a merit. You may well sit a doctor in the college of liberty. You have achieved your right to interpret our Washington. And I speak the sense not only of every generous American, but the law of mind, when I say that it is not those who live idly in the city called after his name, but those who, all over the world, think and act like him, who can claim to explain the sentiment of Washington.

Sir, whatever obstruction from selfishness, indifference, or from property (which always sympathizes with possession) you may encounter, we congratulate you that you have known how to convert calamities into powers, exile into a campaign, present defeat into lasting victory. For this new crusade which you preach

to willing and to unwilling ears in America is a seed of armed men. You have got your story told in every palace and log hut and prairie camp, throughout this continent. And, as the shores of Europe and America approach every month, and their politics will one day mingle, when the crisis arrives it will find us all instructed beforehand in the rights and wrongs of Hungary, and parties already to her freedom.

XX

WOMAN

A LECTURE READ BEFORE THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION, BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 20, 1855

The politics are base,
The letters do not cheer,
And 't is far in the deeps of history,
The voice that speaketh clear.

Yet there in the parlor sits
Some figure in noble guise, —
Our Angel in a stranger's form;
Or Woman's pleading eyes.

"Lo, when the Lord made North and South,
And sun and moon ordained he,
Forth bringing each by word of mouth
In order of its dignity,
Did man from the crude clay express
By sequence, and, all else decreed,
He formed the woman; nor might less
Than Sabbath such a work succeed."

COVENTRY PATMORE

WOMAN

AMONG those movements which seem to be, now and then, endemic in the public mind, — perhaps we should say, sporadic, — rather than the single inspiration of one mind, is that which has urged on society the benefits of action having for its object a benefit to the position of Woman. And none is more seriously interesting to every healthful and thoughtful mind.

In that race which is now predominant over all the other races of men, it was a cherished belief that women had an oracular nature. They are more delicate than men, — delicate as iodine to light, — and thus more impressionable. They are the best index of the coming hour. I share this belief. I think their words are to be weighed; but it is their inconsiderate word, — according to the rule, 'take their first advice, not the second:' as Coleridge was wont to apply to a lady for her judgment in questions of taste, and accept it; but when she added — "I think so, because —" "Pardon me, madam," he said, "leave me to find out the reasons for myself." In this sense, as more delicate mer-

curies of the imponderable and immaterial influences, what they say and think is the shadow of coming events. Their very dolls are indicative. Among our Norse ancestors, Frigga was worshipped as the goddess of women. "Weirdes all," said the Edda, "Frigga knoweth, though she telleth them never." That is to say, all wisdoms Woman knows; though she takes them for granted, and does not explain them as discoveries, like the understanding of man. Men remark figure: women always catch the expression. They inspire by a look, and pass with us not so much by what they say or do, as by their presence. They learn so fast and convey the result so fast as to outrun the logic of their slow brother and make his acquisitions poor.[1] 'T is their mood and tone that is important. Does their mind misgive them, or are they firm and cheerful? 'T is a true report that things are going ill or well. And any remarkable opinion or movement shared by woman will be the first sign of revolution.

Plato said, Women are the same as men in faculty, only less in degree. But the general voice of mankind has agreed that they have their own strength; that women are strong by sentiment; that the same mental height which

their husbands attain by toil, they attain by sympathy with their husbands. Man is the will, and Woman the sentiment. In this ship of humanity, Will is the rudder, and Sentiment the sail: when Woman affects to steer, the rudder is only a masked sail. When women engage in any art or trade, it is usually as a resource, not as a primary object. The life of the affections is primary to them, so that there is usually no employment or career which they will not with their own applause and that of society quit for a suitable marriage. And they give entirely to their affections, set their whole fortune on the die, lose themselves eagerly in the glory of their husbands and children. Man stands astonished at a magnanimity he cannot pretend to. Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, one of the heroines of the English Commonwealth, who wrote the life of her husband, the Governor of Nottingham, says, "If he esteemed her at a higher rate than she in herself could have deserved, he was the author of that virtue he doted on, while she only reflected his own glories upon him. All that she was, was *him*, while he was hers, and all that she is now, at best, but his pale shade." As for Plato's opinion, it is true that, up to recent times, in no art or science, nor in painting,

poetry or music, have they produced a masterpiece. Till the new education and larger opportunities of very modern times, this position, with the fewest possible exceptions, has always been true. Sappho, to be sure, in the Olympic Games, gained the crown over Pindar. But, in general, no mastery in either of the fine arts — which should, one would say, be the arts of women — has yet been obtained by them, equal to the mastery of men in the same. The part they play in education, in the care of the young and the tuition of older children, is their organic office in the world. So much sympathy as they have makes them inestimable as the mediators between those who have knowledge and those who want it: besides, their fine organization, their taste and love of details, makes the knowledge they give better in their hands.

But there is an art which is better than painting, poetry, music, or architecture, — better than botany, geology, or any science; namely, Conversation. Wise, cultivated, genial conversation is the last flower of civilization and the best result which life has to offer us, — a cup for gods, which has no repentance. Conversation is our account of ourselves. All we have, all we can, all we know, is brought into play,

and as the reproduction, in finer form, of all our havings.

Women are, by this and their social influence, the civilizers of mankind. What is civilization? I answer, the power of good women. It was Burns's remark when he first came to Edinburgh that between the men of rustic life and the polite world he observed little difference; that in the former, though unpolished by fashion and unenlightened by science, he had found much observation and much intelligence; but a refined and accomplished woman was a being almost new to him, and of which he had formed a very inadequate idea. "I like women," said a clear-headed man of the world; "they are so finished." They finish society, manners, language. Form and ceremony are their realm. They embellish trifles. All these ceremonies that hedge our life around are not to be despised, and when we have become habituated to them, cannot be dispensed with. No woman can despise them with impunity. Their genius delights in ceremonies, in forms, in decorating life with manners, with properties, order and grace. They are, in their nature, more relative; the circumstance must always be fit; out of place they lose half their weight, out of place they are

disfranchised. Position, Wren said, is essential to the perfecting of beauty; — a fine building is lost in a dark lane; a statue should stand in the air; much more true is it of woman.

We commonly say that easy circumstances seem somehow necessary to the finish of the female character: but then it is to be remembered that they create these with all their might. They are always making that civilization which they require; that state of art, of decoration, that ornamental life in which they best appear.

The spiritual force of man is as much shown in taste, in his fancy and imagination, — attaching deep meanings to things and to arbitrary inventions of no real value, — as in his perception of truth. He is as much raised above the beast by this creative faculty as by any other. The horse and ox use no delays; they run to the river when thirsty, to the corn when hungry, and say no thanks, but fight down whatever opposes their appetite. But man invents and adorns all he does with delays and degrees, paints it all over with forms, to please himself better; he invented majesty and the etiquette of courts and drawing-rooms; architecture, curtains, dress, all luxuries and adornments, and the elegance of privacy, to increase the joys of society.

He invented marriage; and surrounded by religion, by comeliness, by all manner of dignities and renunciations, the union of the sexes.

And how should we better measure the gulf between the best intercourse of men in old Athens, in London, or in our American capitals, — between this and the hedgehog existence of diggers of worms, and the eaters of clay and offal, — than by signalizing just this department of taste or comeliness? Herein woman is the prime genius and ordainer. There is no grace that is taught by the dancing-master, no style adopted into the etiquette of courts, but was first the whim and the mere action of some brilliant woman, who charmed beholders by this new expression, and made it remembered and copied. And I think they should magnify their ritual of manners.[1] Society, conversation, decorum, flowers, dances, colors, forms, are their homes and attendants. They should be found in fit surroundings — with fair approaches, with agreeable architecture, and with all advantages which the means of man collect:

> "The far-fetched diamond finds its home
> Flashing and smouldering in her hair.
> For her the seas their pearls reveal,
> Art and strange lands her pomp supply

With purple, chrome and cochineal,
Ochre and lapis lazuli.
The worm its golden woof presents.
Whatever runs, flies, dives or delves
All doff for her their ornaments,
Which suit her better than themselves." [1]

There is no gift of Nature without some drawback. So, to women, this exquisite structure could not exist without its own penalty. More vulnerable, more infirm, more mortal than men, they could not be such excellent artists in this element of fancy if they did not lend and give themselves to it. They are poets who believe their own poetry. They emit from their pores a colored atmosphere, one would say, wave upon wave of rosy light, in which they walk evermore, and see all objects through this warm-tinted mist that envelops them.

But the starry crown of woman is in the power of her affection and sentiment, and the infinite enlargements to which they lead. Beautiful is the passion of love, painter and adorner of youth and early life: but who suspects, in its blushes and tremors, what tragedies, heroisms and immortalities are beyond it? The passion, with all its grace and poetry, is profane to that which follows it. All these affections

are only introductory to that which is beyond, and to that which is sublime.

We men have no right to say it, but the omnipotence of Eve is in humility. The instincts of mankind have drawn the Virgin Mother —

> "Created beings all in lowliness
> Surpassing, as in height above them all."[1]

This is the Divine Person whom Dante and Milton saw in vision. This is the victory of Griselda, her supreme humility. And it is when love has reached this height that all our pretty rhetoric begins to have meaning. When we see that, it adds to the soul a new soul, it is honey in the mouth, music in the ear and balsam in the heart.

> "Far have I clambered in my mind,
> But nought so great as Love I find.
> What is thy tent, where dost thou dwell?
> 'My mansion is humility,
> Heaven's vastest capability.'
> The further it doth downward tend,
> The higher up it doth ascend."[2]

The first thing men think of, when they love, is to exhibit their usefulness and advantages to the object of their affection. Women make light of these, asking only love. They wish it to be an exchange of nobleness.

There is much in their nature, much in their social position which gives them a certain power of divination. And women know, at first sight, the characters of those with whom they converse. There is much that tends to give them a religious height which men do not attain. Their sequestration from affairs and from the injury to the moral sense which affairs often inflict, aids this. And in every remarkable religious development in the world, women have taken a leading part. It is very curious that in the East, where Woman occupies, nationally, a lower sphere, where the laws resist the education and emancipation of women, — in the Mohammedan faith, Woman yet occupies the same leading position, as a prophetess, that she has among the ancient Greeks, or among the Hebrews, or among the Saxons. This power, this religious character, is everywhere to be remarked in them.[1]

The action of society is progressive. In barbarous society the position of women is always low — in the Eastern nations lower than in the West. "When a daughter is born," says the Shiking, the old Sacred Book of China, "she sleeps on the ground, she is clothed with a wrapper, she plays with a tile; she is incapable of

evil or of good." And something like that position, in all low society, is the position of woman; because, as before remarked, she is herself its civilizer. With the advancements of society, the position and influence of woman bring her strength or her faults into light. In modern times, three or four conspicuous instrumentalities may be marked. After the deification of Woman in the Catholic Church, in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, — when her religious nature gave her, of course, new importance, — the Quakers have the honor of having first established, in their discipline, the equality in the sexes. It is even more perfect in the later sect of the Shakers, where no business is broached or counselled without the intervention of one elder and one elderess.

A second epoch for Woman was in France, — entirely civil; the change of sentiment from a rude to a polite character, in the age of Louis XIV., — commonly dated from the building of the Hôtel de Rambouillet.[1] I think another important step was made by the doctrine of Swedenborg, a sublime genius who gave a scientific exposition of the part played severally by man and woman in the world, and showed the difference of sex to run through nature and

through thought. Of all Christian sects this is at this moment the most vital and aggressive.

Another step was the effect of the action of the age in the antagonism to Slavery. It was easy to enlist Woman in this ; it was impossible not to enlist her. But that Cause turned out to be a great scholar. He was a terrible metaphysician. He was a jurist, a poet, a divine. Was never a University of Oxford or Göttingen that made such students. It took a man from the plough and made him acute, eloquent, and wise, to the silencing of the doctors. There was nothing it did not pry into, no right it did not explore, no wrong it did not expose. And it has, among its other effects, given Woman a feeling of public duty and an added self-respect.

One truth leads in another by the hand ; one right is an accession of strength to take more. And the times are marked by the new attitude of Woman ; urging, by argument and by association, her rights of all kinds, — in short, to one half of the world ; — as the right to education, to avenues of employment, to equal rights of property, to equal rights in marriage, to the exercise of the professions and of suffrage.

Of course, this conspicuousness had its incon-

veniences. But it is cheap wit that has been spent on this subject; from Aristophanes, in whose comedies I confess my dulness to find good joke, to Rabelais, in whom it is monstrous exaggeration of temperament, and not borne out by anything in nature, — down to English Comedy, and, in our day, to Tennyson,[1] and the American newspapers. In all, the body of the joke is one, namely, to charge women with temperament; to describe them as victims of temperament; and is identical with Mahomet's opinion that women have not a sufficient moral or intellectual force to control the perturbations of their physical structure. These were all drawings of morbid anatomy, and such satire as might be written on the tenants of a hospital or on an asylum for idiots. Of course it would be easy for women to retaliate in kind, by painting men from the dogs and gorillas that have worn our shape. That they have not, is an eulogy on their taste and self-respect. The good easy world took the joke which it liked. There is always the want of thought; there is always credulity. There are plenty of people who believe women to be incapable of anything but to cook, incapable of interest in affairs. There are plenty of people who believe that the world is

governed by men of dark complexions, that affairs are only directed by such, and do not see the use of contemplative men, or how ignoble would be the world that wanted them. And so without the affection of women.

But for the general charge: no doubt it is well founded. They are victims of the finer temperament. They have tears, and gayeties, and faintings, and glooms and devotion to trifles. Nature's end, of maternity for twenty years, was of so supreme importance that it was to be secured at all events, even to the sacrifice of the highest beauty. They are more personal. Men taunt them that, whatever they do, say, read or write, they are thinking of themselves and their set. Men are not to the same degree temperamented, for there are multitudes of men who live to objects quite out of them, as to politics, to trade, to letters or an art, unhindered by any influence of constitution.

The answer that lies, silent or spoken, in the minds of well-meaning persons, to the new claims, is this: that though their mathematical justice is not to be denied, yet the best women do not wish these things; they are asked for by people who intellectually seek them, but

who have not the support or sympathy of the truest women; and that, if the laws and customs were modified in the manner proposed, it would embarrass and pain gentle and lovely persons with duties which they would find irksome and distasteful. Very likely. Providence is always surprising us with new and unlikely instruments. But perhaps it is because these people have been deprived of education, fine companions, opportunities, such as they wished, — because they feel the same rudeness and disadvantage which offends you, — that they have been stung to say, 'It is too late for us to be polished and fashioned into beauty, but, at least, we will see that the whole race of women shall not suffer as we have suffered.'

They have an unquestionable right to their own property. And if a woman demand votes, offices and political equality with men, as among the Shakers an Elder and Elderess are of equal power, — and among the Quakers, — it must not be refused. It is very cheap wit that finds it so droll that a woman should vote. Educate and refine society to the highest point, — bring together a cultivated society of both sexes, in a drawing-room, and consult and decide by voices on a question of taste or on a question of right, and

is there any absurdity or any practical difficulty in obtaining their authentic opinions? If not, then there need be none in a hundred companies, if you educate them and accustom them to judge. And, for the effect of it, I can say, for one, that all my points would sooner be carried in the State if women voted. On the questions that are important, — whether the government shall be in one person, or whether representative, or whether democratic; whether men shall be holden in bondage, or shall be roasted alive and eaten, as in Typee, or shall be hunted with bloodhounds, as in this country; whether men shall be hanged for stealing, or hanged at all; whether the unlimited sale of cheap liquors shall be allowed; — they would give, I suppose, as intelligent a vote as the voters of Boston or New York.

We may ask, to be sure, — Why need you vote? If new power is here, of a character which solves old tough questions, which puts me and all the rest in the wrong, tries and condemns our religion, customs, laws, and opens new careers to our young receptive men and women, you can well leave voting to the old dead people. Those whom you teach, and those whom you half teach, will fast enough make themselves considered and

strong with their new insight, and votes will follow from all the dull.

The objection to their voting is the same as is urged, in the lobbies of legislatures, against clergymen who take an active part in politics; — that if they are good clergymen they are unacquainted with the expediencies of politics, and if they become good politicians they are worse clergymen. So of women, that they cannot enter this arena without being contaminated and unsexed.

Here are two or three objections: first, a want of practical wisdom; second, a too purely ideal view; and, third, danger of contamination. For their want of intimate knowledge of affairs, I do not think this ought to disqualify them from voting at any town-meeting which I ever attended. I could heartily wish the objection were sound. But if any man will take the trouble to see how our people vote, — how many gentlemen are willing to take on themselves the trouble of thinking and determining for you, and, standing at the door of the polls, give every innocent citizen his ticket as he comes in, informing him that this is the vote of his party; and how the innocent citizen, without further demur, goes and drops it in the ballot-box, — I cannot but

think he will agree that most women might vote as wisely.

For the other point, of their not knowing the world, and aiming at abstract right without allowance for circumstances, — that is not a disqualification, but a qualification. Human society is made up of partialities. Each citizen has an interest and a view of his own, which, if followed out to the extreme, would leave no room for any other citizen. One man is timid and another rash; one would change nothing, and the other is pleased with nothing; one wishes schools, another armies, one gunboats, another public gardens. Bring all these biases together and something is done in favor of them all.

Every one is a half vote, but the next elector behind him brings the other or corresponding half in his hand: a reasonable result is had. Now there is no lack, I am sure, of the expediency, or of the interests of trade or of imperative class interests being neglected. There is no lack of votes representing the physical wants; and if in your city the uneducated emigrant vote numbers thousands, representing a brutal ignorance and mere animal wants, it is to be corrected by an educated and religious vote, representing the wants and desires of honest and refined persons.

If the wants, the passions, the vices, are allowed a full vote through the hands of a half-brutal intemperate population, I think it but fair that the virtues, the aspirations should be allowed a full vote, as an offset, through the purest part of the people.

As for the unsexing and contamination, — that only accuses our existing politics, shows how barbarous we are, — that our policies are so crooked, made up of things not to be spoken, to be understood only by wink and nudge; this man to be coaxed, that man to be bought, and that other to be duped. It is easy to see that there is contamination enough, but it rots the men now, and fills the air with stench. Come out of that: it is like a dance-cellar. The fairest names in this country in literature, in law, have gone into Congress and come out dishonored. And when I read the list of men of intellect, of refined pursuits, giants in law, or eminent scholars, or of social distinction, leading men of wealth and enterprise in the commercial community, and see what they have voted for and suffered to be voted for, I think no community was ever so politely and elegantly betrayed.

I do not think it yet appears that women wish

this equal share in public affairs. But it is they and not we that are to determine it. Let the laws be purged of every barbarous remainder, every barbarous impediment to women. Let the public donations for education be equally shared by them, let them enter a school as freely as a church, let them have and hold and give their property as men do theirs; — and in a few years it will easily appear whether they wish a voice in making the laws that are to govern them. If you do refuse them a vote, you will also refuse to tax them, — according to our Teutonic principle, No representation, no tax.

All events of history are to be regarded as growths and offshoots of the expanding mind of the race, and this appearance of new opinions, their currency and force in many minds, is itself the wonderful fact. For whatever is popular is important, shows the spontaneous sense of the hour. The aspiration of this century will be the code of the next. It holds of high and distant causes, of the same influences that make the sun and moon. When new opinions appear, they will be entertained and respected, by every fair mind, according to their reasonableness, and not according to their convenience, or their fitness to shock our customs. But let us deal with

them greatly; let them make their way by the upper road, and not by the way of manufacturing public opinion, which lapses continually into expediency, and makes charlatans. All that is spontaneous is irresistible, and forever it is individual force that interests. I need not repeat to you — your own solitude will suggest it — that a masculine woman is not strong, but a lady is. The loneliest thought, the purest prayer, is rushing to be the history of a thousand years.

Let us have the true woman, the adorner, the hospitable, the religious heart, and no lawyer need be called in to write stipulations, the cunning clauses of provision, the strong investitures; — for woman moulds the lawgiver and writes the law. But I ought to say, I think it impossible to separate the interests and education of the sexes. Improve and refine the men, and you do the same by the women, whether you will or no. Every woman being the wife or the daughter of a man, — wife, daughter, sister, mother, of a man, she can never be very far from his ear, never not of his counsel, if she has really something to urge that is good in itself and agreeable to nature. Slavery it is that makes slavery; freedom, freedom. The slavery of women happened when the men were slaves of kings. The

melioration of manners brought their melioration of course. It could not be otherwise, and hence the new desire of better laws. For there are always a certain number of passionately loving fathers, brothers, husbands and sons who put their might into the endeavor to make a daughter, a wife, or a mother happy in the way that suits best. Woman should find in man her guardian. Silently she looks for that, and when she finds that he is not, as she instantly does, she betakes her to her own defences, and does the best she can. But when he is her guardian, fulfilled with all nobleness, knows and accepts his duties as her brother, all goes well for both.

The new movement is only a tide shared by the spirits of man and woman; and you may proceed in the faith that whatever the woman's heart is prompted to desire, the man's mind is simultaneously prompted to accomplish.[1]

XXI

ADDRESS

TO THE INHABITANTS OF CONCORD AT THE
CONSECRATION OF SLEEPY HOLLOW
SEPTEMBER 29, 1855

SLEEPY HOLLOW

"No abbey's gloom, nor dark cathedral stoops,
No winding torches paint the midnight air;
Here the green pines delight, the aspen droops
Along the modest pathways, and those fair
Pale asters of the season spread their plumes
Around this field, fit garden for our tombs.

And shalt thou pause to hear some funeral-bell
Slow stealing o'er the heart in this calm place,
Not with a throb of pain, a feverish knell,
But in its kind and supplicating grace,
It says, Go, pilgrim, on thy march, be more
Friend to the friendless than thou wast before;

Learn from the loved one's rest serenity;
To-morrow that soft bell for thee shall sound,
And thou repose beneath the whispering tree,
One tribute more to this submissive ground; —
Prison thy soul from malice, bar out pride,
Nor these pale flowers nor this still field deride:

Rather to those ascents of being turn
Where a ne'er-setting sun illumes the year
Eternal, and the incessant watch-fires burn
Of unspent holiness and goodness clear, —
Forget man's littleness, deserve the best,
God's mercy in thy thought and life confest."

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

ADDRESS

TO THE INHABITANTS OF CONCORD AT THE CONSECRATION OF SLEEPY HOLLOW SEPTEMBER 29, 1855

CITIZENS AND FRIENDS: The committee to whom was confided the charge of carrying out the wishes of the town in opening the cemetery, having proceeded so far as to enclose the ground, and cut the necessary roads, and having laid off as many lots as are likely to be wanted at present, have thought it fit to call the inhabitants together, to show you the ground, now that the new avenues make its advantages appear; and to put it at your disposition.

They have thought that the taking possession of this field ought to be marked by a public meeting and religious rites: and they have requested me to say a few words which the serious and tender occasion inspires.

And this concourse of friendly company assures me that they have rightly interpreted your wishes. [Here followed, in the address, about three pages of matter which Mr. Emerson used later in his essay on Immortality, which may be found in the volume *Letters and Social Aims*,

beginning on page 324, "The credence of men," etc., and ending on pages 326–27 with the sentence, "Meantime the true disciples saw, through the letters, the doctrine of eternity which dissolved the poor corpse and nature also, and gave grandeur to the passing hour."]

In these times we see the defects of our old theology; its inferiority to our habit of thoughts. Men go up and down; Science is popularized; the irresistible democracy — shall I call it? — of chemistry, of vegetation, which recomposes for new life every decomposing particle, — the race never dying, the individual never spared, — have impressed on the mind of the age the futility of these old arts of preserving. We give our earth to earth. We will not jealously guard a few atoms under immense marbles, selfishly and impossibly sequestering it from the vast circulations of Nature, but, at the same time, fully admitting the divine hope and love which belong to our nature, wishing to make one spot tender to our children, who shall come hither in the next century to read the dates of these lives.

Our people accepting this lesson from science, yet touched by the tenderness which Christianity breathes, have found a mean in the consecration of gardens. A simultaneous movement has, in

a hundred cities and towns in this country, selected some convenient piece of undulating ground with pleasant woods and waters; every family chooses its own clump of trees; and we lay the corpse in these leafy colonnades.

A grove of trees, — what benefit or ornament is so fair and great? they make the landscape; they keep the earth habitable; their roots run down, like cattle, to the water-courses; their heads expand to feed the atmosphere. The life of a tree is a hundred and a thousand years; its decays ornamental; its repairs self-made: they grow when we sleep, they grew when we were unborn. Man is a moth among these longevities. He plants for the next millennium. Shadows haunt them; all that ever lived about them cling to them. You can almost see behind these pines the Indian with bow and arrow lurking yet exploring the traces of the old trail.

Modern taste has shown that there is no ornament, no architecture alone, so sumptuous as well disposed woods and waters, where art has been employed only to remove superfluities, and bring out the natural advantages. In cultivated grounds one sees the picturesque and opulent effect of the familiar shrubs, barberry, lilac, privet and thorns, when they are disposed in

masses, and in large spaces. What work of man will compare with the plantation of a park? It dignifies life. It is a seat for friendship, counsel, taste and religion. I do not wonder that they are the chosen badge and point of pride of European nobility. But how much more are they needed by us, anxious, overdriven Americans, to stanch and appease that fury of temperament which our climate bestows!

This tract fortunately lies adjoining to the Agricultural Society's ground, to the New Burial Ground, to the Court House and the Town House, making together a large block of public ground, permanent property of the town and county, — all the ornaments of either adding so much value to all.

I suppose all of us will readily admit the value of parks and cultivated grounds to the pleasure and education of the people, but I have heard it said here that we would gladly spend for a park for the living, but not for a cemetery; a garden for the living, a home of thought and friendship. Certainly the living need it more than the dead; indeed, to speak precisely, it is given to the dead for the reaction of benefit on the living. But if the direct regard to the living be thought expedient, that is also in your power. This ground

is happily so divided by Nature as to admit of this relation between the Past and the Present. In the valley where we stand will be the Monuments. On the other side of the ridge, towards the town, a portion of the land is in full view of the cheer of the village and is out of sight of the Monuments; it admits of being reserved for secular purposes; for games, — not such as the Greeks honored the dead with, but for games of education; the distribution of school prizes; the meeting of teachers; patriotic eloquence, the utterance of the principles of national liberty to private, social, literary or religious fraternities. Here we may establish that most agreeable of all museums, and agreeable to the temper of our times, — an *Arboretum*, — wherein may be planted, by the taste of every citizen, one tree, with its name recorded in a book; every tree that is native to Massachusetts, or will grow in it; so that every child may be shown growing, side by side, the eleven oaks of Massachusetts; and the twenty willows; the beech, which we have allowed to die out of the eastern counties; and here the vast firs of California and Oregon.

This spot for twenty years has borne the name of *Sleepy Hollow*. Its seclusion from the village in its immediate neighborhood had made it to

all the inhabitants an easy retreat on a Sabbath day, or a summer twilight, and it was inevitably chosen by them when the design of a new cemetery was broached, if it did not suggest the design, as the fit place for their final repose. In all the multitudes of woodlands and hillsides, which within a few years have been laid out with a similar design, I have not known one so fitly named. *Sleepy Hollow*. In this quiet valley, as in the palm of Nature's hand, we shall sleep well when we have finished our day. What is the Earth itself but a surface scooped into nooks and caves of slumber — according to the Eastern fable, a bridge full of holes, into one or other of which all the passengers sink to silence? Nay, when I think of the mystery of life, its round of illusions, our ignorance of its beginning or its end, the speed of the changes of that glittering dream we call existence, — I think sometimes that the vault of the sky arching there upward, under which our busy being is whirled, is only a Sleepy Hollow, with path of Suns, instead of foot-paths; and Milky Ways, for truck-roads.

The ground has the peaceful character that belongs to this town; — no lofty crags, no glittering cataracts; — but I hold that every part of Nature is handsome when not deformed by bad

Art. Bleak sea-rocks and sea-downs and blasted heaths have their own beauty; and though we make much ado in our praises of Italy or Andes, Nature makes not so much difference. The morning, the moonlight, the spring day, are magical painters, and can glorify a meadow or a rock.

But we must look forward also, and make ourselves a thousand years old; and when these acorns, that are falling at our feet, are oaks overshadowing our children in a remote century, this mute green bank will be full of history: the good, the wise and great will have left their names and virtues on the trees; heroes, poets, beauties, sanctities, benefactors, will have made the air timeable and articulate.

And hither shall repair, to this modest spot of God's earth, every sweet and friendly influence; the beautiful night and beautiful day will come in turn to sit upon the grass. Our use will not displace the old tenants. The well-beloved birds will not sing one song the less, the high-holding woodpecker, the meadow-lark, the oriole, robin, purple finch, bluebird, thrush and red-eyed warbler, the heron, the bittern will find out the hospitality and protection from the gun of this asylum, and will seek the waters of the

meadow; and in the grass, and by the pond, the locust, the cricket and the hyla, shall shrilly play.

We shall bring hither the body of the dead, but how shall we catch the escaped soul? Here will burn for us, as the oath of God, the sublime belief. I have heard that death takes us away from ill things, not from good. I have heard that when we pronounce the name of man, we pronounce the belief of immortality. All great natures delight in stability; all great men find eternity affirmed in the promise of their faculties. Why is the fable of the Wandering Jew agreeable to men, but because they want more time and land to execute their thoughts in? Life is not long enough for art, nor long enough for friendship. The evidence from intellect is as valid as the evidence from love. The being that can share a thought and feeling so sublime as confidence in truth is no mushroom. Our dissatisfaction with any other solution is the blazing evidence of immortality.

XXII

ROBERT BURNS

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE BURNS CENTENARY, BOSTON JANUARY 25, 1859

"His was the music to whose tone
The common pulse of man keeps time
In cot or castle's mirth or moan,
In cold or sunny clime.

Praise to the bard! his words are driven,
Like flower-seeds by the far winds sown,
Where'er, beneath the sky of heaven,
The birds of fame have flown."

HALLECK

ROBERT BURNS

MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN: I do not know by what untoward accident it has chanced, and I forbear to inquire, that, in this accomplished circle, it should fall to me, the worst Scotsman of all, to receive your commands, and at the latest hour too, to respond to the sentiment just offered, and which indeed makes the occasion. But I am told there is no appeal, and I must trust to the inspirations of the theme to make a fitness which does not otherwise exist. Yet, Sir, I heartily feel the singular claims of the occasion. At the first announcement, from I know not whence, that the 25th of January was the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, a sudden consent warmed the great English race, in all its kingdoms, colonies and states, all over the world, to keep the festival. We are here to hold our parliament with love and poesy, as men were wont to do in the Middle Ages. Those famous parliaments might or might not have had more stateliness and better singers than we, — though that is yet to be known, — but they could not have better reason. I can only

explain this singular unanimity in a race which rarely acts together, but rather after their watchword, Each for himself, — by the fact that Robert Burns, the poet of the middle class, represents in the mind of men to-day that great uprising of the middle class against the armed and privileged minorities, that uprising which worked politically in the American and French Revolutions, and which, not in governments so much as in education and social order, has changed the face of the world.

In order for this destiny, his birth, breeding and fortunes were low. His organic sentiment was absolute independence, and resting as it should on a life of labor. No man existed who could look down on him. They that looked into his eyes saw that they might look down the sky as easily.[1] His muse and teaching was common sense, joyful, aggressive, irresistible. Not Latimer, nor Luther struck more telling blows against false theology than did this brave singer. The Confession of Augsburg, the Declaration of Independence, the French Rights of Man, and the Marseillaise, are not more weighty documents in the history of freedom than the songs of Burns. His satire has lost none of its edge. His musical arrows yet sing through the air.

He is so substantially a reformer that I find his grand plain sense in close chain with the greatest masters, — Rabelais, Shakspeare in comedy, Cervantes, Butler, and Burns. If I should add another name, I find it only in a living countryman of Burns.[1]

He is an exceptional genius. The people who care nothing for literature and poetry care for Burns. It was indifferent — they thought who saw him — whether he wrote verse or not: he could have done anything else as well. Yet how true a poet is he! And the poet, too, of poor men, of gray hodden and the guernsey coat and the blouse. He has given voice to all the experiences of common life; he has endeared the farmhouse and cottage, patches and poverty, beans and barley; ale, the poor man's wine; hardship; the fear of debt; the dear society of weans and wife, of brothers and sisters, proud of each other, knowing so few and finding amends for want and obscurity in books and thoughts.[2] What a love of Nature, and, shall I say it? of middle-class Nature. Not like Goethe, in the stars, or like Byron, in the ocean, or Moore, in the luxurious East, but in the homely landscape which the poor see around them, — bleak leagues of pasture and stubble, ice and sleet and

rain and snow-choked brooks; birds, hares, field-mice, thistles and heather, which he daily knew. How many "Bonny Doons" and "John Anderson my jo's" and "Auld lang synes" all around the earth have his verses been applied to! And his love-songs still woo and melt the youths and maids; the farm-work, the country holiday, the fishing-cobble are still his debtors to-day.

And as he was thus the poet of the poor, anxious, cheerful, working humanity, so had he the language of low life. He grew up in a rural district, speaking a *patois* unintelligible to all but natives, and he has made the Lowland Scotch a Doric dialect of fame. It is the only example in history of a language made classic by the genius of a single man. But more than this. He had that secret of genius to draw from the bottom of society the strength of its speech, and astonish the ears of the polite with these artless words, better than art, and filtered of all offence through his beauty. It seemed odious to Luther that the devil should have all the best tunes; he would bring them into the churches; and Burns knew how to take from fairs and gypsies, blacksmiths and drovers, the speech of the market and street, and clothe it with melody. But I am detaining you too long. The memory of Burns,

— I am afraid heaven and earth have taken too good care of it to leave us anything to say. The west winds are murmuring it. Open the windows behind you, and hearken for the incoming tide, what the waves say of it. The doves perching always on the eaves of the Stone Chapel opposite, may know something about it. Every name in broad Scotland keeps his fame bright. The memory of Burns, — every man's, every boy's and girl's head carries snatches of his songs, and they say them by heart, and, what is strangest of all, never learned them from a book, but from mouth to mouth. The wind whispers them, the birds whistle them, the corn, barley, and bulrushes hoarsely rustle them, nay, the music-boxes at Geneva are framed and toothed to play them ; the hand-organs of the Savoyards in all cities repeat them, and the chimes of bells ring them in the spires. They are the property and the solace of mankind.[1]

XXIII

REMARKS

AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE THREE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF SHAKSPEARE BY THE SATURDAY CLUB AT THE REVERE HOUSE. BOSTON, 1864

England's genius filled all measure
Of heart and soul, of strength and pleasure.
Gave to mind its emperor
And life was larger than before;
And centuries brood, nor can attain
The sense and bound of Shakspeare's brain.
The men who lived with him became
Poets, for the air was fame.

SHAKSPEARE

THIS not our fault if we have not made this evening's circle still richer than it is. We seriously endeavored, besides our brothers and our seniors, on whom the ordinary lead of literary and social action falls — and falls because of their ability — to draw out of their retirements a few rarer lovers of the muse — "seld-seen flamens" — whom this day seemed to elect and challenge. And it is to us a painful disappointment that Bryant and Whittier as guests, and our own Hawthorne, — with the best will to come, — should have found it impossible at last; and again, that a well-known and honored compatriot, who first in Boston wrote elegant verse, and on Shakspeare, and whose American devotion through forty or fifty years to the affairs of a bank, has not been able to bury the fires of his genius, — Mr. Charles Sprague, — pleads the infirmities of age as an absolute bar to his presence with us.

We regret also the absence of our members Sumner and Motley.

We can hardly think of an occasion where

so little need be said. We are all content to let Shakspeare speak for himself. His fame is settled on the foundations of the moral and intellectual world. Wherever there are men, and in the degree in which they are civil — have power of mind, sensibility to beauty, music, the secrets of passion, and the liquid expression of thought, he has risen to his place as the first poet of the world.

Genius is the consoler of our mortal condition, and Shakspeare taught us that the little world of the heart is vaster, deeper and richer than the spaces of astronomy. What shocks of surprise and sympathetic power, this battery, which he is, imparts to every fine mind that is born! We say to the young child in the cradle, 'Happy, and defended against Fate! for here is Nature, and here is Shakspeare, waiting for you!'

'T is our metre of culture. He is a cultivated man — who can tell us something new of Shakspeare. All criticism is only a making of rules out of his beauties. He is as superior to his countrymen, as to all other countrymen. He fulfilled the famous prophecy of Socrates, that the poet most excellent in tragedy would be most excellent in comedy, and more than

fulfilled it by making tragedy also a victorious melody which healed its own wounds. In short, Shakspeare is the one resource of our life on which no gloom gathers; the fountain of joy which honors him who tastes it; day without night; pleasure without repentance; the genius which, in unpoetic ages, keeps poetry in honor and, in sterile periods, keeps up the credit of the human mind.

His genius has reacted on himself. Men were so astonished and occupied by his poems that they have not been able to see his face and condition, or say, who was his father and his brethren; or what life he led; and at the short distance of three hundred years he is mythical, like Orpheus and Homer, and we have already seen the most fantastic theories plausibly urged, as that Raleigh and Bacon were the authors of the plays.

Yet we pause expectant before the genius of Shakspeare — as if his biography were not yet written; until the problem of the whole English race is solved.

I see, among the lovers of this catholic genius, here present, a few, whose deeper knowledge invites me to hazard an article of my literary creed; that Shakspeare, by his transcendant

reach of thought, so unites the extremes, that, whilst he has kept the theatre now for three centuries, and, like a street-bible, furnishes sayings to the market, courts of law, the senate, and common discourse, — he is yet to all wise men the companion of the closet. The student finds the solitariest place not solitary enough to read him; and so searching is his penetration, and such the charm of his speech, that he still agitates the heart in age as in youth, and will, until it ceases to beat.

Young men of a contemplative turn carry his sonnets in the pocket. With that book, the shade of any tree, a room in any inn, becomes a chapel or oratory in which to sit out their happiest hours. Later they find riper and manlier lessons in the plays.

And secondly, he is the most robust and potent thinker that ever was. I find that it was not history, courts and affairs that gave him lessons, but he that gave grandeur and prestige to them. There never was a writer who, seeming to draw every hint from outward history, the life of cities and courts, owed them so little. You shall never find in this world the barons or kings he depicted. 'T is fine for Englishmen to say, they only know history by Shakspeare.

The palaces they compass earth and sea to enter, the magnificence and personages of royal and imperial abodes, are shabby imitations and caricatures of his, — clumsy pupils of his instruction. There are no Warwicks, no Talbots, no Bolingbrokes, no Cardinals, no Harry Fifth, in real Europe, like his. The loyalty and royalty he drew were all his own. The real Elizabeths, Jameses and Louises were painted sticks before this magician.

The unaffected joy of the comedy, — he lives in a gale, — contrasted with the grandeur of the tragedy, where he stoops to no contrivance, no pulpiting, but flies an eagle at the heart of the problem; where his speech is a Delphi, — the great Nemesis that he is and utters. What a great heart of equity is he! How good and sound and inviolable his innocency, that is never to seek, and never wrong, but speaks the pure sense of humanity on each occasion. He dwarfs all writers without a solitary exception. No egotism. The egotism of men is immense. It concealed Shakspeare for a century. His mind has a superiority such that the universities should read lectures on him, and conquer the unconquerable if they can.

There are periods fruitful of great men; others, barren; or, as the world is always equal to itself, periods when the heat is latent, — others when it is given out.

They are like the great wine years, — the vintage of 1847, is it? or 1835? — which are not only noted in the carte of the table d'hôte, but which, it is said, are always followed by new vivacity in the politics of Europe. His birth marked a great wine year when wonderful grapes ripened in the vintage of God, when Shakspeare and Galileo were born within a few months of each other, and Cervantes was his exact contemporary, and, in short space before and after, Montaigne, Bacon, Spenser, Raleigh and Jonson. Yet Shakspeare, not by any inferiority of theirs, but simply by his colossal proportions, dwarfs the geniuses of Elizabeth as easily as the wits of Anne, or the poor slipshod troubadours of King René.

In our ordinary experience of men there are some men so born to live well that, in whatever company they fall, — high or low, — they fit well, and lead it! but, being advanced to a higher class, they are just as much in their element as before, and easily command: and being again preferred to selecter companions, find no

obstacle to ruling these as they did their earlier mates; I suppose because they have more humanity than talent, whilst they have quite as much of the last as any of the company. It would strike you as comic, if I should give my own customary examples of this elasticity, though striking enough to me. I could name in this very company — or not going far out of it — very good types, but in order to be parliamentary, Franklin, Burns and Walter Scott are examples of the rule; and king of men, by this grace of God also, is Shakspeare.

The Pilgrims came to Plymouth in 1620. The plays of Shakspeare were not published until three years later. Had they been published earlier, our forefathers, or the most poetical among them, might have stayed at home to read them.

XXIV

HUMBOLDT

AN ABSTRACT OF MR. EMERSON'S REMARKS MADE AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT, SEPTEMBER 14, 1869

"If a life prolonged to an advanced period bring with it several inconveniences to the individual, there is a compensation in the delight of being able to compare older states of knowledge with that which now exists, and to see great advances in knowledge develop themselves under our eyes in departments which had long slept in inactivity."

HUMBOLDT, *Letter to Ritter.*

HUMBOLDT

HUMBOLDT was one of those wonders of the world, like Aristotle, like Julius Cæsar, like the Admirable Crichton, who appear from time to time, as if to show us the possibilities of the human mind, the force and the range of the faculties, — a universal man, not only possessed of great particular talents, but they were symmetrical, his parts were well put together. As we know, a man's natural powers are often a sort of committee that slowly, one at a time, give their attention and action; but Humboldt's were all united, one electric chain, so that a university, a whole French Academy, travelled in his shoes. With great propriety, he named his sketch of the results of science Cosmos. There is no other such survey or surveyor. The wonderful Humboldt, with his solid centre and expanded wings, marches like an army, gathering all things as he goes. How he reaches from science to science, from law to law, folding away moons and asteroids and solar systems in the clauses and parentheses of his encyclopædic paragraphs! There is no book like it; none indicating such a battalion of powers. You

could not put him on any sea or shore but his instant recollection of every other sea or shore illuminated this.

He was properly a man of the world; you could not lose him; you could not detain him; you could not disappoint him, for at any point on land or sea he found the objects of his researches. When he was stopped in Spain and could not get away, he turned round and interpreted their mountain system, explaining the past history of the continent of Europe. He belonged to that wonderful German nation, the foremost scholars in all history, who surpass all others in industry, space and endurance. A German reads a literature whilst we are reading a book. One of their writers warns his countrymen that it is not the Battle of Leipsic, but the Leipsic Fair Catalogue, which raises them above the French. I remember Cuvier tells us of fossil elephants; that Germany has furnished the greatest number; — not because there are more elephants in Germany, — oh no; but because in that empire there is no canton without some well-informed person capable of making researches and publishing interesting results. I know that we have been accustomed to think they were too good scholars, that because they

reflect, they never resolve, that "in a crisis no plan-maker was to be found in the empire;" but we have lived to see now, for the second time in the history of Prussia, a statesman of the first class, with a clear head and an inflexible will.

XXV

WALTER SCOTT

REMARKS AT THE CELEBRATION BY THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH, AUGUST 15, 1871

Scott, the delight of generous boys.

As far as Sir Walter Scott aspired to be known for a fine gentleman, so far our sympathies leave him. . . . Our concern is only with the residue, where the man Scott was warmed with a divine ray that clad with beauty every sheet of water, every bald hill in the country he looked upon, and so reanimated the well-nigh obsolete feudal history and illustrated every hidden corner of a barren and disagreeable territory.

Lecture, "Being and Seeing," 1838.

WALTER SCOTT

THE memory of Sir Walter Scott is dear to this Society, of which he was for ten years an honorary member. If only as an eminent antiquary who has shed light on the history of Europe and of the English race, he had high claims to our regard. But to the rare tribute of a centennial anniversary of his birthday, which we gladly join with Scotland, and indeed with Europe, to keep, he is not less entitled — perhaps he alone among literary men of this century is entitled — by the exceptional debt which all English-speaking men have gladly owed to his character and genius. I think no modern writer has inspired his readers with such affection to his own personality. I can well remember as far back as when The Lord of the Isles was first republished in Boston, in 1815, — my own and my school-fellows' joy in the book.[1] Marmion and The Lay had gone before, but we were then learning to spell. In the face of the later novels, we still claim that his poetry is the delight of boys. But this means that when we reopen these old books we all consent to be boys again. We tread over our

youthful grounds with joy. Critics have found them to be only rhymed prose. But I believe that many of those who read them in youth, when, later, they come to dismiss finally their school-days' library, will make some fond exception for Scott as for Byron.

It is easy to see the origin of his poems. His own ear had been charmed by old ballads crooned by Scottish dames at firesides, and written down from their lips by antiquaries; and finding them now outgrown and dishonored by the new culture, he attempted to dignify and adapt them to the times in which he lived. Just so much thought, so much picturesque detail in dialogue or description as the old ballad required, so much suppression of details and leaping to the event, he would keep and use, but without any ambition to write a high poem after a classic model. He made no pretension to the lofty style of Spenser, or Milton, or Wordsworth. Compared with their purified songs, purified of all ephemeral color or material, his were *vers de société*. But he had the skill proper to *vers de société*, — skill to fit his verse to his topic, and not to write solemn pentameters alike on a hero or a spaniel. His good sense probably elected the ballad to make

his audience larger. He apprehended in advance the immense enlargement of the reading public, which almost dates from the era of his books, — which his books and Byron's inaugurated; and which, though until then unheard of, has become familiar to the present time.

If the success of his poems, however large, was partial, that of his novels was complete. The tone of strength in Waverley at once announced the master, and was more than justified by the superior genius of the following romances, up to the Bride of Lammermoor, which almost goes back to Æschylus for a counterpart as a painting of Fate, — leaving on every reader the impression of the highest and purest tragedy.[1]

His power on the public mind rests on the singular union of two influences. By nature, by his reading and taste an aristocrat, in a time and country which easily gave him that bias, he had the virtues and graces of that class, and by his eminent humanity and his love of labor escaped its harm. He saw in the English Church the symbol and seal of all social order; in the historical aristocracy the benefits to the state which Burke claimed for it; and in his own reading and research such store of legend and

renown as won his imagination to their cause. Not less his eminent humanity delighted in the sense and virtue and wit of the common people. In his own household and neighbors he found characters and pets of humble class, with whom he established the best relation,— small farmers and tradesmen, shepherds, fishermen, gypsies, peasant-girls, crones, — and came with these into real ties of mutual help and good will. From these originals he drew so genially his Jeanie Deans, his Dinmonts and Edie Ochiltrees, Caleb Balderstones and Fairservices, Cuddie Headriggs, Dominies, Meg Merrilies, and Jenny Rintherouts, full of life and reality; making these, too, the pivots on which the plots of his stories turn; and meantime without one word of brag of this discernment, — nay, this extreme sympathy reaching down to every beggar and beggar's dog, and horse and cow. In the number and variety of his characters he approaches Shakspeare. Other painters in verse or prose have thrown into literature a few type-figures; as Cervantes, De Foe, Richardson, Goldsmith, Sterne and Fielding; but Scott portrayed with equal strength and success every figure in his crowded company.

His strong good sense saved him from the

faults and foibles incident to poets, — from nervous egotism, sham modesty or jealousy. He played ever a manly part.' With such a fortune and such a genius, we should look to see what heavy toll the Fates took of him, as of Rousseau or Voltaire, of Swift or Byron. But no: he had no insanity, or vice, or blemish. He was a thoroughly upright, wise and great-hearted man, equal to whatever event or fortune should try him. Disasters only drove him to immense exertion. What an ornament and safeguard is humor! Far better than wit for a poet and writer. It is a genius itself, and so defends from the insanities.

Under what rare conjunction of stars was this man born, that, wherever he lived, he found superior men, passed all his life in the best company, and still found himself the best of the best! He was apprenticed at Edinburgh to a Writer to the Signet, and became a Writer to the Signet, and found himself in his youth and manhood and age in the society of Mackintosh, Horner, Jeffrey, Playfair, Dugald Stewart, Sydney Smith, Leslie, Sir William Hamilton, Wilson, Hogg, De Quincey, — to name only some of his literary neighbors, and, as soon as he died, all this brilliant circle was broken up.

XXVI

SPEECH

AT BANQUET IN HONOR OF THE CHINESE EMBASSY BOSTON, 1868

Nature creates in the East the uncontrollable yearning to escape from limitation into the vast and boundless, to use a freedom of fancy which plays with all works of Nature, great or minute, galaxy or grain of dust, as toys and words of the mind; inculcates a beatitude to be found in escape from all organization and all personality, and makes ecstasy an institution.

SPEECH

AT THE BANQUET IN HONOR OF THE CHINESE EMBASSY

MR. MAYOR: I suppose we are all of one opinion on this remarkable occasion of meeting the embassy sent from the oldest Empire in the world to the youngest Republic. All share the surprise and pleasure when the venerable Oriental dynasty — hitherto a romantic legend to most of us — suddenly steps into the fellowship of nations. This auspicious event, considered in connection with the late innovations in Japan, marks a new era, and is an irresistible result of the science which has given us the power of steam and the electric telegraph. It is the more welcome for the surprise. We had said of China, as the old prophet said of Egypt, "Her strength is to sit still." Her people had such elemental conservatism that by some wonderful force of race and national manners, the wars and revolutions that occur in her annals have proved but momentary swells or surges on the pacific ocean of her history, leaving no trace. But in its immovability this race has claims. China is old, not in time only,

but in wisdom, which is gray hair to a nation, — or, rather, truly seen, is eternal youth. As we know, China had the magnet centuries before Europe; and block-printing or stereotype, and lithography, and gunpowder, and vaccination, and canals; had anticipated Linnæus's nomenclature of plants; had codes, journals, clubs, hackney coaches, and, thirty centuries before New York, had the custom of New Year's calls of comity and reconciliation. I need not mention its useful arts, — its pottery indispensable to the world, the luxury of silks, and its tea, the cordial of nations. But I must remember that she has respectable remains of astronomic science, and historic records of forgotten time, that have supplied important gaps in the ancient history of the western nations. Then she has philosophers who cannot be spared. Confucius has not yet gathered all his fame. When Socrates heard that the oracle declared that he was the wisest of men, he said, it must mean that other men held that they were wise, but that he knew that he knew nothing. Confucius had already affirmed this of himself: and what we call the Golden Rule of Jesus, Confucius had uttered in the same terms five hundred years before. His morals, though addressed to a state of

society unlike ours, we read with profit to-day. His rare perception appears in his GOLDEN MEAN, his doctrine of Reciprocity, his unerring insight, — putting always the blame of our misfortunes on ourselves ; as when to the governor who complained of thieves, he said, " If you, sir, were not covetous, though you should reward them for it, they would not steal." His ideal of greatness predicts Marcus Antoninus. At the same time, he abstained from paradox, and met the ingrained prudence of his nation by saying always, " Bend one cubit to straighten eight."

China interests us at this moment in a point of politics. I am sure that gentlemen around me bear in mind the bill which the Hon. Mr. Jenckes of Rhode Island has twice attempted to carry through Congress, requiring that candidates for public offices shall first pass examinations on their literary qualifications for the same. Well, China has preceded us, as well as England and France, in this essential correction of a reckless usage ; and the like high esteem of education appears in China in social life, to whose distinctions it is made an indispensable passport.

It is gratifying to know that the advantages

of the new intercourse between the two countries are daily manifest on the Pacific coast. The immigrants from Asia come in crowds. Their power of continuous labor, their versatility in adapting themselves to new conditions, their stoical economy, are unlooked-for virtues. They send back to their friends, in China, money, new products of art, new tools, machinery, new foods, etc., and are thus establishing a commerce without limit. I cannot help adding, after what I have heard to-night, that I have read in the journals a statement from an English source, that Sir Frederic Bruce attributed to Mr. Burlingame the merit of the happy reform in the relations of foreign governments to China. I am quite sure that I heard from Mr. Burlingame in New York, in his last visit to America, that the whole merit of it belonged to Sir Frederic Bruce. It appears that the ambassadors were emulous in their magnanimity. It is certainly the best guaranty for the interests of China and of humanity.

XXVII

REMARKS

AT THE MEETING FOR ORGANIZING THE FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION, BOSTON

MAY 30, 1867

In many forms we try
To utter God's infinity,
But the Boundless hath no form,
And the Universal Friend
Doth as far transcend
An angel as a worm.

The great Idea baffles wit,
Language falters under it,
It leaves the learned in the lurch;
Nor art, nor power, nor toil can find
The measure of the eternal Mind,
Nor hymn nor prayer nor church.

REMARKS

AT THE MEETING FOR ORGANIZING THE FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hardly felt, in finding this house this morning, that I had come into the right hall. I came, as I supposed myself summoned, to a little committee meeting, for some practical end, where I should happily and humbly learn my lesson; and I supposed myself no longer subject to your call when I saw this house. I have listened with great pleasure to the lessons which we have heard. To many, to those last spoken, I have found so much in accord with my own thought that I have little left to say. I think that it does great honor to the sensibility of the committee that they have felt the universal demand in the community for just the movement they have begun. I say again, in the phrase used by my friend, that we began many years ago, — yes, and many ages before that. But I think the necessity very great, and it has prompted an equal magnanimity, that thus invites all classes, all religious men, whatever their connections, whatever their specialties, in whatever relation they stand to the

Christian Church, to unite in a movement of benefit to men, under the sanction of religion. We are all very sensible — it is forced on us every day — of the feeling that churches are outgrown; that the creeds are outgrown; that a technical theology no longer suits us. It is not the ill will of people — no, indeed, but the incapacity for confining themselves there. The church is not large enough for the man; it cannot inspire the enthusiasm which is the parent of everything good in history, which makes the romance of history. For that enthusiasm you must have something greater than yourselves, and not less.

The child, the young student, finds scope in his mathematics and chemistry or natural history, because he finds a truth larger than he is; finds himself continually instructed. But, in churches, every healthy and thoughtful mind finds itself in something less; it is checked, cribbed, confined. And the statistics of the American, the English and the German cities, showing that the mass of the population is leaving off going to church, indicate the necessity, which should have been foreseen, that the Church should always be new and extemporized, because it is eternal and springs from the sentiment

of men, or it does not exist.[1] One wonders sometimes that the churches still retain so many votaries, when he reads the histories of the Church. There is an element of childish infatuation in them which does not exalt our respect for man. Read in Michelet, that in Europe, for twelve or fourteen centuries, God the Father had no temple and no altar. The Holy Ghost and the Son of Mary were worshipped, and in the thirteenth century the First Person began to appear at the side of his Son, in pictures and in sculpture, for worship, but only through favor of his Son. These mortifying puerilities abound in religious history. But as soon as every man is apprised of the Divine Presence within his own mind, — is apprised that the perfect law of duty corresponds with the laws of chemistry, of vegetation, of astronomy, as face to face in a glass; that the basis of duty, the order of society, the power of character, the wealth of culture, the perfection of taste, all draw their essence from this moral sentiment, then we have a religion that exalts, that commands all the social and all the private action.

What strikes me in the sudden movement which brings together to-day so many separated friends, — separated but sympathetic, —

and what I expected to find here, was some practical suggestions by which we were to reanimate and reorganize for ourselves the true Church, the pure worship. Pure doctrine always bears fruit in pure benefits. It is only by good works, it is only on the basis of active duty, that worship finds expression. What is best in the ancient religions was the sacred friendships between heroes, the Sacred Bands, and the relations of the Pythagorean disciples. Our Masonic institutions probably grew from the like origin. The close association which bound the first disciples of Jesus is another example; and it were easy to find more. The soul of our late war, which will always be remembered as dignifying it, was, first, the desire to abolish slavery in this country, and secondly, to abolish the mischief of the war itself, by healing and saving the sick and wounded soldiers, — and this by the sacred bands of the Sanitary Commission. I wish that the various beneficent institutions which are springing up, like joyful plants of wholesomeness, all over this country, should all be remembered as within the sphere of this committee, — almost all of them are represented here, — and that within this little band that has gathered

here to-day, should grow friendship. The interests that grow out of a meeting like this should bind us with new strength to the old eternal duties.

XXVIII

SPEECH

AT THE SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION, AT TREMONT TEMPLE FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1869

Thou metest him by centuries,
And lo! he passes like the breeze;
Thou seek'st in globe and galaxy,
He hides in pure transparency;
Thou ask'st in fountains and in fires,
He is the essence that inquires.

SPEECH

AT SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION

FRIENDS: I wish I could deserve anything of the kind expression of my friend, the President, and the kind good will which the audience signifies, but it is not in my power to-day to meet the natural demands of the occasion, and, quite against my design and my will, I shall have to request the attention of the audience to a few written remarks, instead of the more extensive statement which I had hoped to offer them.

I think we have disputed long enough. I think we might now relinquish our theological controversies to communities more idle and ignorant than we. I am glad that a more realistic church is coming to be the tendency of society, and that we are likely one day to forget our obstinate polemics in the ambition to excel each other in good works. I have no wish to proselyte any reluctant mind, nor, I think, have I any curiosity or impulse to intrude on those whose ways of thinking differ from mine. But as my friend, your presiding officer, has asked

me to take at least some small part in this day's conversation, I am ready to give, as often before, the first simple foundation of my belief, that the Author of Nature has not left himself without a witness in any sane mind : that the moral sentiment speaks to every man the law after which the Universe was made ; that we find parity, identity of design, through Nature, and benefit to be the uniform aim : that there is a force always at work to make the best better and the worst good.[1] We have had not long since presented us by Max Müller a valuable paragraph from St. Augustine, not at all extraordinary in itself, but only as coming from that eminent Father in the Church, and at that age, in which St. Augustine writes: "That which is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist from the planting of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion which already existed began to be called Christianity." I believe that not only Christianity is as old as the Creation, — not only every sentiment and precept of Christianity can be paralleled in other religious writings, — but more, that a man of religious susceptibility, and one at the same time conversant with many men, — say a much-

travelled man, — can find the same idea in numberless conversations. The religious find religion wherever they associate. When I find in people narrow religion, I find also in them narrow reading. Nothing really is so self-publishing, so divulgatory, as thought. It cannot be confined or hid. It is easily carried; it takes no room; the knowledge of Europe looks out into Persia and India, and to the very Kaffirs. Every proverb, every fine text, every pregnant jest, travels across the line; and you will find it at Cape Town, or among the Tartars. We are all believers in natural religion; we all agree that the health and integrity of man is self-respect, self-subsistency, a regard to natural conscience. All education is to accustom him to trust himself, discriminate between his higher and lower thoughts, exert the timid faculties until they are robust, and thus train him to self-help, until he ceases to be an underling, a tool, and becomes a benefactor. I think wise men wish their religion to be all of this kind, teaching the agent to go alone, not to hang on the world as a pensioner, a permitted person, but an adult, self-searching soul, brave to assist or resist a world: only humble and docile before the source of the wisdom he has discovered within him.

As it is, every believer holds a different creed; that is, all the churches are churches of one member. All our sects have refined the point of difference between them. The point of difference that still remains between churches, or between classes, is in the addition to the moral code, that is, to natural religion, of somewhat positive and historical. I think that to be, as Mr. Abbot has stated it in his form, the one difference remaining. I object, of course, to the claim of miraculous dispensation, — certainly not to the *doctrine* of Christianity.[1] This claim impairs, to my mind, the soundness of him who makes it, and indisposes us to his communion. This comes the wrong way; it comes from without, not within. This positive, historical, authoritative scheme is not consistent with our experience or our expectations. It is something not in Nature: it is contrary to that law of Nature which all wise men recognize; namely, never to require a larger cause than is necessary to the effect. George Fox, the Quaker, said that, though he read of Christ and God, he knew them only from the like spirit in his own soul. We want all the aids to our moral training. We cannot spare the vision nor the virtue of the saints; but let it be by pure sympathy, not with any

personal or official claim. If you are childish, and exhibit your saint as a worker of wonders, a thaumaturgist, I am repelled. That claim takes his teachings out of logic and out of nature, and permits official and arbitrary senses to be grafted on the teachings. It is the praise of our New Testament that its teachings go to the honor and benefit of humanity, — that no better lesson has been taught or incarnated. Let it stand, beautiful and wholesome, with whatever is most like it in the teaching and practice of men; but do not attempt to elevate it out of humanity, by saying, 'This was not a man,' for then you confound it with the fables of every popular religion, and my distrust of the story makes me distrust the doctrine as soon as it differs from my own belief.

Whoever thinks a story gains by the prodigious, by adding something out of nature, robs it more than he adds. It is no longer an example, a model; no longer a heart-stirring hero, but an exhibition, a wonder, an anomaly, removed out of the range of influence with thoughtful men. I submit that in sound frame of mind, we read or remember the religious sayings and oracles of other men, whether Jew or Indian, or Greek or Persian, only for friendship, only for

joy in the social identity which they open to us, and that these words would have no weight with us if we had not the same conviction already. I find something stingy in the unwilling and disparaging admission of these foreign opinions — opinions from all parts of the world — by our churchmen, as if only to enhance by their dimness the superior light of Christianity. Meantime, observe, you cannot bring me too good a word, too dazzling a hope, too penetrating an insight from the Jews. I hail every one with delight, as showing the riches of my brother, my fellow soul, who could thus think and thus greatly feel. Zealots eagerly fasten their eyes on the differences between their creed and yours, but the charm of the study is in finding the agreements, the identities, in all the religions of men.[1]

I am glad to hear each sect complain that they do not now hold the opinions they are charged with. The earth moves, and the mind opens. I am glad to believe society contains a class of humble souls who enjoy the luxury of a religion that does not degrade ; who think it the highest worship to expect of Heaven the most and the best; who do not wonder that there was a Christ, but that there were not

a thousand; who have conceived an infinite hope for mankind; who believe that the history of Jesus is the history of every man, written large.[1]

XXIX

ADDRESS

AT THE OPENING OF THE CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The bishop of Cavaillon, Petrarch's friend, in a playful experiment locked up the poet's library, intending to exclude him from it for three days, but the poet's misery caused him to restore the key on the first evening. "And I verily believe I should have become insane," says Petrarch, "if my mind had longer been deprived of its necessary nourishment."

ADDRESS

AT THE OPENING OF THE CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

THE people of Massachusetts prize the simple political arrangement of towns, each independent in its local government, electing its own officers, assessing its taxes, caring for its schools, its charities, its highways. That town is attractive to its native citizens and to immigrants which has a healthy site, good land, good roads, good sidewalks, a good hotel; still more, if it have an adequate town hall, good churches, good preachers, good schools, and if it avail itself of the Act of the Legislature authorizing towns to tax themselves for the establishment of a public library. Happier, if it contain citizens who cannot wait for the slow growth of the population to make these advantages adequate to the desires of the people, but make costly gifts to education, civility and culture, as in the act we are met to witness and acknowledge to-day.

I think we cannot easily overestimate the benefit conferred. In the details of this munificence, we may all anticipate a sudden and

lasting prosperity to this ancient town, in the benefit of a noble library, which adds by the beauty of the building, and its skilful arrangement, a quite new attraction, — making readers of those who are not readers, — making scholars of those who only read newspapers or novels until now; and whilst it secures a new and needed culture to our citizens, offering a strong attraction to strangers who are seeking a country home to sit down here. And I am not sure that when Boston learns the good deed of Mr. Munroe, it will not be a little envious, nor rest until it has annexed Concord to the city. Our founder has found the many admirable examples which have lately honored the country, of benefactors who have not waited to bequeath colleges and hospitals, but have themselves built them, reminding us of Sir Isaac Newton's saying, "that they who give nothing before their death, never in fact give at all."

I think it is not easy to exaggerate the utility of the beneficence which takes this form. If you consider what has befallen you when reading a poem, or a history, or a tragedy, or a novel, even, that deeply interested you, — how you forgot the time of day, the persons sitting in the room, and the engagements for the evening, you

will easily admit the wonderful property of books to make all towns equal: that Concord Library makes Concord as good as Rome, Paris or London, for the hour; — has the best of each of those cities in itself. Robinson Crusoe, could he have had a shelf of our books, could almost have done without his man Friday, or even the arriving ship.

Every faculty casts itself into an art, and memory into the art of writing, that is, the book. The sedge *Papyrus*, which gave its name to our word paper, is of more importance to history than cotton, or silver, or gold. Its first use for writing is between three and four thousand years old, and though it hardly grows now in Egypt, where I lately looked for it in vain, I always remember with satisfaction that I saw that venerable plant in 1833, growing wild at Syracuse, in Sicily, near the fountain of Arethusa.

The chairman of Mr. Munroe's trustees has told you how old is the foundation of our village library, and we think we can trace in our modest records a correspondent effect of culture amidst our citizens. A deep religious sentiment is, in all times, an inspirer of the intellect, and that was not wanting here. The town was settled by

a pious company of non-conformists from England, and the printed books of their pastor and leader, Rev. Peter Bulkeley, sometime fellow of Saint John's College in Cambridge, England, testify the ardent sentiment which they shared. "There is no people," said he to his little flock of exiles, "but will strive to excel in something. What can we excel in if not in holiness? If we look to number, we are the fewest; if to strength, we are the weakest; if to wealth and riches, we are the poorest of all the people of God through the whole world. We cannot excel, nor so much as equal other people in these things, and if we come short in grace and holiness too, we are the most despicable people under heaven. Strive we therefore herein to excel, and suffer not this crown to be taken away from us." [1]

The religious bias of our founders had its usual effect to secure an education to read their Bible and hymn-book, and thence the step was easy for active minds to an acquaintance with history and with poetry. Peter Bulkeley sent his son John to the first class that graduated at Harvard College in 1642, and two sons to later classes. Major Simon Willard's son Samuel graduated at Harvard in 1659, and was for six years, from 1701 to 1707, vice-president of the college; and

his son Joseph was president of the college from 1781 to 1804; and Concord counted fourteen graduates of Harvard in its first century, and its representation there increased with its gross population.[1]

I possess the manuscript journal of a lady, native of this town (and descended from three of its clergymen), who removed into Maine, where she possessed a farm and a modest income. She was much addicted to journeying and not less to reading, and whenever she arrived in a town where was a good minister who had a library, she would persuade him to receive her as a boarder, and would stay until she had looked over all his volumes which were to her taste. On a very cold day, she writes in her diary, "Life truly resembles a river — ever the same — never the same; and perhaps a greater variety of internal emotions would be felt by remaining with books in one place than pursuing the waves which are ever the same. Is the melancholy bird of night, covered with the dark foliage of the willow and cypress, less gratified than the gay lark amid the flowers and suns? I think that you never enjoy so much as in solitude with a book that meets the feelings," and in reference to her favorite authors, she adds, "The delight

in others' superiority is my best gift from God."[1]

Lemuel Shattuck, by his history of the town, has made all of us grateful to his memory as a careful student and chronicler; but events so important have occurred in the forty years since that book was published, that it now needs a second volume.

Henry Thoreau we all remember as a man of genius, and of marked character, known to our farmers as the most skilful of surveyors, and indeed better acquainted with their forests and meadows and trees than themselves, but more widely known as the writer of some of the best books which have been written in this country, and which, I am persuaded, have not yet gathered half their fame. He, too, was an excellent reader. No man would have rejoiced more than he in the event of this day. In a private letter to a lady, he writes, "Do you read any noble verses? For my part, they have been the only things I remembered, — or that which occasioned them, — when all things else were blurred and defaced.[2] All things have put on mourning but they: for the elegy itself is some victorious melody in you, escaping from the wreck. It is a relief to read some true books

wherein all are equally dead, equally alive. I think the best parts of Shakspeare would only be enhanced by the most thrilling and affecting events. I have found it so: and all the more, that they are not intended for consolation."

Nathaniel Hawthorne's residence in the Manse gave new interest to that house whose windows overlooked the retreat of the British soldiers in 1775, and his careful studies of Concord life and history are known wherever the English language is spoken.'

I know the word literature has in many ears a hollow sound. It is thought to be the harmless entertainment of a few fanciful persons, and not at all to be the interest of the multitude. To these objections, which proceed on the cheap notion that nothing but what grinds corn, roasts mutton and weaves cotton, is anything worth, I have little to say. There are utilitarians who prefer that Jesus should have wrought as a carpenter, and Saint Paul as a tent-maker. But literature is the record of the best thoughts. Every attainment and discipline which increases a man's acquaintance with the invisible world lifts his being. Everything that gives him a new perception of beauty multiplies his pure enjoyments. A river of thought is always running

out of the invisible world into the mind of man. Shall not they who received the largest streams spread abroad the healing waters?

It was the symbolical custom of the ancient Mexican priests, after the annual extinction of the household fires of their land, to procure in the temple fire from the sun, and thence distribute it as a sacred gift to every hearth in the nation. It is a just type of the service rendered to mankind by wise men. Homer and Plato and Pindar and Shakspeare serve many more than have heard their names. Thought is the most volatile of all things. It cannot be contained in any cup, though you shut the lid never so tight. Once brought into the world, it runs over the vessel which received it into all minds that love it. The very language we speak thinks for us by the subtle distinctions which already are marked for us by its words, and every one of these is the contribution of the wit of one and another sagacious man in all the centuries of time.

Consider that it is our own state of mind at any time that makes our estimate of life and the world. If you sprain your foot, you will presently come to think that Nature has sprained hers. Everything begins to look so slow and

inaccessible. And when you sprain your mind, by gloomy reflection on your failures and vexations, you come to have a bad opinion of life. Think how indigent Nature must appear to the blind, the deaf, and the idiot. Now if you can kindle the imagination by a new thought, by heroic histories, by uplifting poetry, instantly you expand, — are cheered, inspired, and become wise, and even prophetic. Music works this miracle for those who have a good ear; what omniscience has music! so absolutely impersonal, and yet every sufferer feels his secret sorrow reached. Yet to a scholar the book is as good or better. There is no hour of vexation which on a little reflection will not find diversion and relief in the library. His companions are few: at the moment, he has none: but, year by year, these silent friends supply their place. Many times the reading of a book has made the fortune of the man, — has decided his way of life. It makes friends. 'T is a tie between men to have been delighted with the same book. Every one of us is always in search of his friend, and when unexpectedly he finds a stranger enjoying the rare poet or thinker who is dear to his own solitude, — it is like finding a brother. Dr. Johnson hearing that Adam Smith,

whom he had once met, relished rhyme, said, "If I had known that, I should have hugged him."

We expect a great man to be a good reader, or in proportion to the spontaneous power should be the assimilating power. There is a wonderful agreement among eminent men of all varieties of character and condition in their estimate of books. Julius Cæsar, when shipwrecked, and forced to swim for life, did not gather his gold, but took his Commentaries between his teeth and swam for the shore. Even the wild and warlike Arab Mahomet said, "Men are either learned or learning: the rest are blockheads." The great Duke of Marlborough could not encamp without his Shakspeare. The Duchess d'Abrantes, wife of Marshal Junot, tells us that Bonaparte, in hastening out of France to join his army in Germany, tossed his journals and books out of his travelling carriage as fast as he had read them, and strewed the highway with pamphlets. Napoleon's reading could not be large, but his criticism is sometimes admirable, as reported by Las Casas; and Napoleon was an excellent writer. Montesquieu, one of the greatest minds that France has produced, writes: "The love of study is in us almost the

only eternal passion. All the others quit us in proportion as this miserable machine which gives them to us approaches its ruin. Study has been for me the sovereign remedy against the disgusts of life, never having had a chagrin which an hour of reading has not put to flight." Hear the testimony of Seldon, the oracle of the English House of Commons in Cromwell's time. " Patience is the chiefest fruit of study. A man, that strives to make himself a different thing from other men by much reading gains this chiefest good, that in all fortunes he hath something to entertain and comfort himself withal."

I have found several humble men and women who gave as affectionate, if not as judicious testimony to their readings. One curious witness was that of a Shaker who, when showing me the houses of the Brotherhood, and a very modest bookshelf, said there was Milton's Paradise Lost, and some other books in the house, and added " that he knew where they were, but he took up a sound cross in not reading them."

In 1618 (8th March) John Kepler came upon the discovery of the law connecting the mean distances of the planets with the periods of their revolution about the sun, that the squares of the times vary as the cubes of the

distances. And he writes, " It is now eighteen months since I got the first glimpse of light, — three months since the dawn, — very few days since the unveiled sun, most admirable to gaze on, burst out upon me. Nothing holds me. I will indulge in my sacred fury. I will triumph over mankind by the honest confession that I have stolen the golden vases of the Egyptians [1] to build up a tabernacle for my God far away from the confines of Egypt. If you forgive me, I rejoice; if you are angry, I can bear it: the die is cast; the book is written; to be read either now or by posterity. I care not which. It may well wait a century for a reader, since God has waited six thousand years for an observer like myself."

In books I have the history or the energy of the past. Angels they are to us of entertainment, sympathy and provocation. With them many of us spend the most of our life, — these silent guides, — these tractable prophets, historians, and singers, whose embalmed life is the highest feat of art; who now cast their moonlight illumination over solitude, weariness and fallen fortunes. You say, 't is a languid pleasure. Yes, but its tractableness, coming and going like a dog at our bidding, compensates

the quietness, and contrasts with the slowness of fortune and the inaccessibleness of persons.

You meet with a man of science, a good thinker or good wit, — but you do not know how to draw out of him that which he knows. But the book is a sure friend, always ready at your first leisure, — opens to the very page you desire, and shuts at your first fatigue, — as possibly your professor might not.

It is a tie between men to have read the same book, and it is a disadvantage not to have read the book your mates have read, or not to have read it at the same time, so that it may take the place in your culture it does in theirs, and you shall understand their allusions to it, and not give it more or less emphasis than they do. Yet the strong character does not need this sameness of culture. The imagination knows its own food in every pasture, and if it has not had the Arabian Nights, Prince Le Boo, or Homer or Scott, has drawn equal delight and terror from haunts and passages which you will hear of with envy.

In saying these things for books, I do not for a moment forget that they are secondary, mere means, and only used in the off-hours, only in the pause, and, as it were, the sleep, or

passive state of the mind. The intellect reserves all its rights. Instantly, when the mind itself wakes, all books, all past acts are forgotten, huddled aside as impertinent in the august presence of the creator. Their costliest benefit is that they set us free from themselves; for they wake the imagination and the sentiment,— and in their inspirations we dispense with books. Let me add then, — read proudly; put the duty of being read invariably on the author. If he is not read, whose fault is it? I am quite ready to be charmed, — but I shall not make believe I am charmed.

But there is no end to the praise of books, to the value of the library. Who shall estimate their influence on our population where all the millions read and write? It is the joy of nations that man can communicate all his thoughts, discoveries and virtues to records that may last for centuries.

But I am pleading a cause which in the event of this day has already won: and I am happy in the assurance that the whole assembly to whom I speak entirely sympathize in the feeling of this town in regard to the new Library, and its honored Founder.

XXX

THE FORTUNE OF THE REPUBLIC

"THERE is a mystery in the soul of state
Which hath an operation more divine
Than breath or pen can give expression to."

THE FORTUNE OF THE REPUBLIC

IT is a rule that holds in economy as well as in hydraulics that you must have a source higher than your tap. The mills, the shops, the theatre and the caucus, the college and the church, have all found out this secret. The sailors sail by chronometers that do not lose two or three seconds in a year, ever since Newton explained to Parliament that the way to improve navigation was to get good watches, and to offer public premiums for a better time-keeper than any then in use. The manufacturers rely on turbines of hydraulic perfection ; the carpet-mill, on mordants and dyes which exhaust the skill of the chemist ; the calico print, on designers of genius who draw the wages of artists, not of artisans. Wedgwood, the eminent potter, bravely took the sculptor Flaxman to counsel, who said, "Send to Italy, search the museums for the forms of old Etruscan vases, urns, waterpots, domestic and sacrificial vessels of all kinds." They built great works and called their manufacturing village Etruria. Flaxman, with his Greek taste, selected and combined

the loveliest forms, which were executed in English clay ; sent boxes of these as gifts to every court of Europe, and formed the taste of the world. It was a renaissance of the breakfast-table and china-closet. The brave manufacturers made their fortune. The jewellers imitated the revived models in silver and gold.

The theatre avails itself of the best talent of poet, of painter, and of amateur of taste, to make the *ensemble* of dramatic effect. The marine insurance office has its mathematical counsellor to settle averages ; the life-assurance, its table of annuities. The wine-merchant has his analyst and taster, the more exquisite the better. He has also, I fear, his debts to the chemist as well as to the vineyard.

Our modern wealth stands on a few staples, and the interest nations took in our war was exasperated by the importance of the cotton trade. And what is cotton? One plant out of some two hundred thousand known to the botanist, vastly the larger part of which are reckoned weeds. What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered, — every one of the two hundred thousand probably yet to be of utility in the arts. As Bacchus of the vine, Ceres of the wheat, as Arkwright and Whitney were

the demi-gods of cotton, so prolific Time will yet bring an inventor to every plant. There is not a property in Nature but a mind is born to seek and find it. For it is not the plants or the animals, innumerable as they are, nor the whole magazine of material nature that can give the sum of power, but the infinite applicability of these things in the hands of thinking man, every new application being equivalent to a new material.[1]

Our sleepy civilization, ever since Roger Bacon and Monk Schwartz invented gunpowder, has built its whole art of war, all fortification by land and sea, all drill and military education, on that one compound, — all is an extension of a gun-barrel, — and is very scornful about bows and arrows, and reckons Greeks and Romans and Middle Ages little better than Indians and bow-and-arrow times. As if the earth, water, gases, lightning and caloric had not a million energies, the discovery of any one of which could change the art of war again, and put an end to war by the exterminating forces man can apply.

Now, if this is true in all the useful and in the fine arts, that the direction must be drawn from a superior source or there will be no good

work, does it hold less in our social and civil life?

In our popular politics you may note that each aspirant who rises above the crowd, however at first making his obedient apprenticeship in party tactics, if he have sagacity, soon learns that it is by no means by obeying the vulgar weathercock of his party, the resentments, the fears and whims of it, that real power is gained, but that he must often face and resist the party, and abide by his resistance, and put them in fear; that the only title to their permanent respect, and to a larger following, is to see for himself what is the real public interest, and to stand for that; — that is a principle, and all the cheering and hissing of the crowd must by and by accommodate itself to it. Our times easily afford you very good examples.

The law of water and all fluids is true of wit. Prince Metternich said, "Revolutions begin in the best heads and run steadily down to the populace." It is a very old observation; not truer because Metternich said it, and not less true.

There have been revolutions which were not in the interest of feudalism and barbarism, but in that of society. And these are distinguished

not by the numbers of the combatants nor the numbers of the slain, but by the motive. No interest now attaches to the wars of York and Lancaster, to the wars of German, French and Spanish emperors, which were only dynastic wars, but to those in which a principle was involved. These are read with passionate interest and never lose their pathos by time. When the cannon is aimed by ideas, when men with religious convictions are behind it, when men die for what they live for, and the mainspring that works daily urges them to hazard all, then the cannon articulates its explosions with the voice of a man, then the rifle seconds the cannon and the fowling-piece the rifle, and the women make the cartridges, and all shoot at one mark; then gods join in the combat; then poets are born, and the better code of laws at last records the victory.

Now the culmination of these triumphs of humanity — and which did virtually include the extinction of slavery — is the planting of America.

At every moment some one country more than any other represents the sentiment and the future of mankind. None will doubt that America occupies this place in the opinion of

nations, as is proved by the fact of the vast immigration into this country from all the nations of Western and Central Europe. And when the adventurers have planted themselves and looked about, they send back all the money they can spare to bring their friends.

Meantime they find this country just passing through a great crisis in its history, as necessary as lactation or dentition or puberty to the human individual. We are in these days settling for ourselves and our descendants questions which, as they shall be determined in one way or the other, will make the peace and prosperity or the calamity of the next ages. The questions of Education, of Society, of Labor, the direction of talent, of character, the nature and habits of the American, may well occupy us, and more the question of Religion.

The new conditions of mankind in America are really favorable to progress, the removal of absurd restrictions and antique inequalities. The mind is always better the more it is used, and here it is kept in practice. The humblest is daily challenged to give his opinion on practical questions, and while civil and social freedom exists, nonsense even has a favorable effect. Cant is good to provoke common sense. . . .

The trance-mediums, the rebel paradoxes, exasperate the common sense. The wilder the paradox, the more sure is Punch to put it in the pillory.

The lodging the power in the people, as in republican forms, has the effect of holding things closer to common sense; for a court or an aristocracy, which must always be a small minority, can more easily run into follies than a republic, which has too many observers — each with a vote in his hand — to allow its head to be turned by any kind of nonsense: since hunger, thirst, cold, the cries of children and debt are always holding the masses hard to the essential duties.

One hundred years ago the American people attempted to carry out the bill of political rights to an almost ideal perfection. They have made great strides in that direction since. They are now proceeding, instructed by their success and by their many failures, to carry out, not the bill of rights, but the bill of human duties.

And look what revolution that attempt involves. Hitherto government has been that of the single person or of the aristocracy. In this country the attempt to resist these elements, it

is asserted, must throw us into the government not quite of mobs, but in practice of an inferior class of professional politicians, who by means of newspapers and caucuses really thrust their unworthy minority into the place of the old aristocracy on the one side, and of the good, industrious, well-taught but unambitious population on the other, win the posts of power and give their direction to affairs. Hence liberal congresses and legislatures ordain, to the surprise of the people, equivocal, interested and vicious measures. The men themselves are suspected and charged with lobbying and being lobbied. No measure is attempted for itself, but the opinion of the people is courted in the first place, and the measures are perfunctorily carried through as secondary. We do not choose our own candidate, no, nor any other man's first choice, — but only the available candidate, whom, perhaps, no man loves. We do not speak what we think, but grope after the practicable and available. Instead of character, there is a studious exclusion of character. The people are feared and flattered. They are not reprimanded. The country is governed in bar-rooms, and in the mind of bar-rooms. The low can best win the low, and each aspirant for power

vies with his rival which can stoop lowest, and depart widest from himself.

The partisan on moral, even on religious questions, will choose a proven rogue who can answer the tests, over an honest, affectionate, noble gentleman; the partisan ceasing to be a man that he may be a sectarian.

The spirit of our political economy is low and degrading. The precious metals are not so precious as they are esteemed. Man exists for his own sake, and not to add a laborer to the state. The spirit of our political action, for the most part, considers nothing less than the sacredness of man. Party sacrifices man to the measure.[1]

We have seen the great party of property and education in the country drivelling and huckstering away, for views of party fear or advantage, every principle of humanity and the dearest hopes of mankind; the trustees of power only energetic when mischief could be done, imbecile as corpses when evil was to be prevented.

Our great men succumb so far to the forms of the day as to peril their integrity for the sake of adding to the weight of their personal character the authority of office, or making a real

government titular. Our politics are full of adventurers, who having by education and social innocence a good repute in the state, break away from the law of honesty and think they can afford to join the devil's party. 'T is odious, these offenders in high life. You rally to the support of old charities and the cause of literature, and there, to be sure, are these brazen faces. In this innocence you are puzzled how to meet them ; must shake hands with them, under protest.' We feel toward them as the minister about the Cape Cod farm, — in the old time when the minister was still invited, in the spring, to make a prayer for the blessing of a piece of land, — the good pastor being brought to the spot, stopped short : " No, this land does not want a prayer, this land wants manure."

" 'T is virtue which they want, and wanting it,
Honor no garment to their backs can fit." [2]

Parties keep the old names, but exhibit a surprising fugacity in creeping out of one snake-skin into another of equal ignominy and lubricity, and the grasshopper on the turret of Faneuil Hall gives a proper hint of the men below.

Everything yields. The very glaciers are

viscous, or relegate into conformity, and the stiffest patriots falter and compromise; so that *will* cannot be depended on to save us.

How rare are acts of will! We are all living according to custom; we do as other people do, and shrink from an act of our own. Every such act makes a man famous, and we can all count the few cases — half a dozen in our time — when a public man ventured to act as he thought without waiting for orders or for public opinion. John Quincy Adams was a man of an audacious independence that always kept the public curiosity alive in regard to what he might do. None could predict his word, and a whole congress could not gainsay it when it was spoken. General Jackson was a man of will, and his phrase on one memorable occasion, "I will take the responsibility," is a proverb ever since.[1]

The American marches with a careless swagger to the height of power, very heedless of his own liberty or of other peoples', in his reckless confidence that he can have all he wants, risking all the prized charters of the human race, bought with battles and revolutions and religion, gambling them all away for a paltry selfish gain.

He sits secure in the possession of his vast

domain, rich beyond all experience in resources, sees its inevitable force unlocking itself in elemental order day by day, year by year; looks from his coal-fields, his wheat-bearing prairie, his gold-mines, to his two oceans on either side, and feels the security that there can be no famine in a country reaching through so many latitudes, no want that cannot be supplied, no danger from any excess of importation of art or learning into a country of such native strength, such immense digestive power.

In proportion to the personal ability of each man, he feels the invitation and career which the country opens to him. He is easily fed with wheat and game, with Ohio wine, but his brain is also pampered by finer draughts, by political power and by the power in the railroad board, in the mills, or the banks. This elevates his spirits, and gives, of course, an easy self-reliance that makes him self-willed and unscrupulous.

I think this levity is a reaction on the people from the extraordinary advantages and invitations of their condition. When we are most disturbed by their rash and immoral voting, it is not malignity, but recklessness. They are careless of politics, because they do not entertain the possibility of being seriously caught in meshes

of legislation. They feel strong and irresistible. They believe that what they have enacted they can repeal if they do not like it. But one may run a risk once too often. They stay away from the polls, saying that one vote can do no good! Or they take another step, and say 'One vote can do no harm!' and vote for something which they do not approve, because their party or set votes for it. Of course this puts them in the power of any party having a steady interest to promote which does not conflict manifestly with the pecuniary interest of the voters. But if they should come to be interested in themselves and in their career, they would no more stay away from the election than from their own counting-room or the house of their friend.

The people are right-minded enough on ethical questions, but they must pay their debts, and must have the means of living well, and not pinching. So it is useless to rely on them to go to a meeting, or to give a vote, if any check from this must-have-the-money side arises. If a customer looks grave at their newspaper, or damns their member of Congress, they take another newspaper, and vote for another man. They must have money, for a certain style of living fast becomes necessary; they must take

wine at the hotel, first, for the look of it, and second, for the purpose of sending the bottle to two or three gentlemen at the table ; and presently because they have got the taste, and do not feel that they have dined without it.

The record of the election now and then alarms people by the all but unanimous choice of a rogue and a brawler. But how was it done? What lawless mob burst into the polls and threw in these hundreds of ballots in defiance of the magistrates? This was done by the very men you know, — the mildest, most sensible, best-natured people. The only account of this is, that they have been scared or warped into some association in their mind of the candidate with the interest of their trade or of their property.

Whilst each cabal urges its candidate, and at last brings, with cheers and street demonstrations, men whose names are a knell to all hope of progress, the good and wise are hidden in their active retirements, and are quite out of question.

"These we must join to wake, for these are of the strain
That justice dare defend, and will the age maintain."[1]

Yet we know, all over this country, men of integrity, capable of action and of affairs, with the

deepest sympathy in all that concerns the public, mortified by the national disgrace, and quite capable of any sacrifice except of their honor.

Faults in the working appear in our system, as in all, but they suggest their own remedies. After every practical mistake out of which any disaster grows, the people wake and correct it with energy. And any disturbances in politics, in civil or foreign wars, sober them, and instantly show more virtue and conviction in the popular vote. In each new threat of faction the ballot has been, beyond expectation, right and decisive.

It is ever an inspiration, God only knows whence; a sudden, undated perception of eternal right coming into and correcting things that were wrong; a perception that passes through thousands as readily as through one.

The gracious lesson taught by science to this country is that the history of Nature from first to last is incessant advance from less to more, from rude to finer organization, the globe of matter thus conspiring with the principle of undying hope in man. Nature works in immense time, and spends individuals and races prodigally to prepare new individuals and races. The lower kinds are one after one extinguished; the

higher forms come in.' The history of civilization, or the refining of certain races to wonderful power of performance, is analogous; but the best civilization yet is only valuable as a ground of hope.

Ours is the country of poor men. Here is practical democracy; here is the human race poured out over the continent to do itself justice; all mankind in its shirt-sleeves; not grimacing like poor rich men in cities, pretending to be rich, but unmistakably taking off its coat to hard work, when labor is sure to pay.[2] This through all the country. For really, though you see wealth in the capitals, it is only a sprinkling of rich men in the cities and at sparse points; the bulk of the population is poor. In Maine, nearly every man is a lumberer. In Massachusetts, every twelfth man is a shoemaker, and the rest, millers, farmers, sailors, fishermen.

Well, the result is, instead of the doleful experience of the European economist, who tells us, "In almost all countries the condition of the great body of the people is poor and miserable," here that same great body has arrived at a sloven plenty, — ham and corn-cakes, tight roof and coals enough have been attained; an unbuttoned comfort, not clean, not thoughtful, far from

polished, without dignity in his repose; the man awkward and restless if he have not something to do, but honest and kind for the most part, understanding his own rights and stiff to maintain them, and disposed to give his children a better education than he received.

The steady improvement of the public schools in the cities and the country enables the farmer or laborer to secure a precious primary education. It is rare to find a born American who cannot read and write. The facility with which clubs are formed by young men for discussion of social, political and intellectual topics secures the notoriety of the questions.

Our institutions, of which the town is the unit, are all educational, for responsibility educates fast. The town-meeting is, after the high-school, a higher school.' The legislature, to which every good farmer goes once on trial, is a superior academy.

The result appears in the power of invention, the freedom of thinking, in the readiness for reforms, eagerness for novelty, even for all the follies of false science; in the antipathy to secret societies, in the predominance of the democratic party in the politics of the Union, and in the voice of the public even when irregular and

vicious, — the voice of mobs, the voice of lynch law, — because it is thought to be, on the whole, the verdict, though badly spoken, of the greatest number.

All this forwardness and self-reliance, cover self-government; proceed on the belief that as the people have made a government they can make another; that their union and law are not in their memory, but in their blood and condition. If they unmake a law, they can easily make a new one. In Mr. Webster's imagination the American Union was a huge Prince Rupert's drop, which will snap into atoms if so much as the smallest end be shivered off. Now the fact is quite different from this. The people are loyal, law-abiding. They prefer order, and have no taste for misrule and uproar.

America was opened after the feudal mischief was spent, and so the people made a good start. We began well. No inquisition here, no kings, no nobles, no dominant church. Here heresy has lost its terrors. We have eight or ten religions in every large town, and the most that comes of it is a degree or two on the thermometer of fashion; a pew in a particular church gives an easier entrance to the subscription ball.

We began with freedom, and are defended

from shocks now for a century by the facility with which through popular assemblies every necessary measure of reform can instantly be carried. A congress is a standing insurrection, and escapes the violence of accumulated grievance. As the globe keeps its identity by perpetual change, so our civil system, by perpetual appeal to the people and acceptance of its reforms.

The government is acquainted with the opinions of all classes, knows the leading men in the middle class, knows the leaders of the humblest class. The President comes near enough to these; if he does not, the caucus does, the primary ward and town-meeting, and what is important does reach him.

The men, the women, all over this land shrill their exclamations of impatience and indignation at what is short-coming or is unbecoming in the government, — at the want of humanity, of morality, — ever on broad grounds of general justice, and not on the class-feeling which narrows the perception of English, French, German people at home.

In this fact, that we are a nation of individuals, that we have a highly intellectual organization, that we can see and feel moral distinctions, and that on such an organization sooner or later the

moral laws must tell, to such ears must speak, — in this is our hope. For if the prosperity of this country has been merely the obedience of man to the guiding of Nature, — of great rivers and prairies, — yet is there fate above fate, if we choose to spread this language; or if there is fate in corn and cotton, so is there fate in thought, — this, namely, that the largest thought and the widest love are born to victory, and must prevail.

The revolution is the work of no man, but the eternal effervescence of Nature. It never did not work. And we say that revolutions beat all the insurgents, be they never so determined and politic; that the great interests of mankind, being at every moment through ages in favor of justice and the largest liberty, will always, from time to time, gain on the adversary and at last win the day. Never country had such a fortune, as men call fortune, as this, in its geography, its history, and in its majestic possibilities.

We have much to learn, much to correct, — a great deal of lying vanity. The spread eagle must fold his foolish wings and be less of a peacock; must keep his wings to carry the thunderbolt when he is commanded. We must realize our rhetoric and our rituals. Our national flag

is not affecting, as it should be, because it does not represent the population of the United States, but some Baltimore or Chicago or Cincinnati or Philadelphia caucus ; not union or justice, but selfishness and cunning. If we never put on the liberty-cap until we were freemen by love and self-denial, the liberty-cap would mean something. I wish to see America not like the old powers of the earth, grasping, exclusive and narrow, but a benefactor such as no country ever was, hospitable to all nations, legislating for all nationalities. Nations were made to help each other as much as families were ; and all advancement is by ideas, and not by brute force or mechanic force.

In this country, with our practical understanding, there is, at present, a great sensualism, a headlong devotion to trade and to the conquest of the continent, — to each man as large a share of the same as he can carve for himself, — an extravagant confidence in our talent and activity, which becomes, whilst successful, a scornful materialism, — but with the fault, of course, that it has no depth, no reserved force whereon to fall back when a reverse comes.

That repose which is the ornament and ripeness of man is not American. That repose which

indicates a faith in the laws of the universe, — a faith that they will fulfil themselves, and are not to be impeded, transgressed or accelerated. Our people are too slight and vain. They are easily elated and easily depressed. See how fast they extend the fleeting fabric of their trade, — not at all considering the remote reaction and bankruptcy, but with the same abandonment to the moment and the facts of the hour as the Esquimau who sells his bed in the morning. Our people act on the moment, and from external impulse. They all lean on some other, and this superstitiously, and not from insight of his merit. They follow a fact; they follow success, and not skill. Therefore, as soon as the success stops and the admirable man blunders, they quit him; already they remember that they long ago suspected his judgment, and they transfer the repute of judgment to the next prosperous person who has not yet blundered. Of course this levity makes them as easily despond. It seems as if history gave no account of any society in which despondency came so readily to heart as we see it and feel it in ours. Young men at thirty and even earlier lose all spring and vivacity, and if they fail in their first enterprise throw up the game.

The source of mischief is the extreme difficulty with which men are roused from the torpor of every day. Blessed is all that agitates the mass, breaks up this torpor, and begins motion. *Corpora non agunt nisi soluta;* the chemical rule is true in mind. Contrast, change, interruption, are necessary to new activity and new combinations.

If a temperate wise man should look over our American society, I think the first danger that would excite his alarm would be the European influences on this country. We buy much of Europe that does not make us better men; and mainly the expensiveness which is ruining that country. We import trifles, dancers, singers, laces, books of patterns, modes, gloves and cologne, manuals of Gothic architecture, steam-made ornaments. America is provincial. It is an immense Halifax. See the secondariness and aping of foreign and English life, that runs through this country, in building, in dress, in eating, in books. Every village, every city, has its architecture, its costume, its hotel, its private house, its church, from England.

Our politics threaten her. Her manners threaten us. Life is grown and growing so costly that it threatens to kill us. A man is coming,

here as there, to value himself on what he can buy. Worst of all, his expense is not his own, but a far-off copy of Osborne House or the Elysée. The tendency of this is to make all men alike; to extinguish individualism and choke up all the channels of inspiration from God in man. We lose our invention and descend into imitation. A man no longer conducts his own life. It is manufactured for him. The tailor makes your dress; the baker your bread; the upholsterer, from an imported book of patterns, your furniture; the Bishop of London your faith.

In the planters of this country, in the seventeenth century, the conditions of the country, combined with the impatience of arbitrary power which they brought from England, forced them to a wonderful personal independence and to a certain heroic planting and trading. Later this strength appeared in the solitudes of the West, where a man is made a hero by the varied emergencies of his lonely farm, and neighborhoods must combine against the Indians, or the horse-thieves, or the river rowdies, by organizing themselves into committees of vigilance. Thus the land and sea educate the people, and bring out presence of mind, self-reliance, and hundred-

handed activity. These are the people for an emergency. They are not to be surprised, and can find a way out of any peril. This rough and ready force becomes them, and makes them fit citizens and civilizers. But if we found them clinging to English traditions, which are graceful enough at home, as the English Church, and entailed estates, and distrust of popular election, we should feel this reactionary, and absurdly out of place.

Let the passion for America cast out the passion for Europe. Here let there be what the earth waits for, — exalted manhood. What this country longs for is personalities, grand persons, to counteract its materialities. For it is the rule of the universe that corn shall serve man, and not man corn.

They who find America insipid — they for whom London and Paris have spoiled their own homes — can be spared to return to those cities. I not only see a career at home for more genius than we have, but for more than there is in the world.

The class of which I speak make themselves merry without duties. They sit in decorated club-houses in the cities, and burn tobacco and play whist; in the country they sit idle in stores

and bar-rooms, and burn tobacco, and gossip and sleep. They complain of the flatness of American life; "America has no illusions, no romance." They have no perception of its destiny. They are not Americans.

The felon is the logical extreme of the epicure and coxcomb. Selfish luxury is the end of both, though in one it is decorated with refinements, and in the other brutal. But my point now is, that this spirit is not American.

Our young men lack idealism. A man for success must not be pure idealist, then he will practically fail; but he must have ideas, must obey ideas, or he might as well be the horse he rides on. A man does not want to be sun-dazzled, sun-blind; but every man must have glimmer enough to keep him from knocking his head against the walls. And it is in the interest of civilization and good society and friendship, that I dread to hear of well-born, gifted and amiable men, that they have this indifference, disposing them to this despair.

Of no use are the men who study to do exactly as was done before, who can never understand that to-day is a new day. There never was such a combination as this of ours, and the rules to meet it are not set down in any history. We

want men of original perception and original action, who can open their eyes wider than to a nationality, — namely, to considerations of benefit to the human race, — can act in the interest of civilization; men of elastic, men of moral mind, who can live in the moment and take a step forward. Columbus was no backward-creeping crab, nor was Martin Luther, nor John Adams, nor Patrick Henry, nor Thomas Jefferson; and the Genius or Destiny of America is no log or sluggard, but a man incessantly advancing, as the shadow on the dial's face, or the heavenly body by whose light it is marked.

The flowering of civilization is the finished man, the man of sense, of grace, of accomplishment, of social power, — the gentleman. What hinders that he be born here? The new times need a new man, the complemental man, whom plainly this country must furnish. Freer swing his arms; farther pierce his eyes; more forward and forthright his whole build and rig than the Englishman's, who, we see, is much imprisoned in his backbone.

'T is certain that our civilization is yet incomplete, it has not ended nor given sign of ending in a hero. 'T is a wild democracy; the riot of mediocrities and dishonesties and fudges.

Ours is the age of the omnibus, of the third person plural, of Tammany Hall. Is it that Nature has only so much vital force, and must dilute it if it is to be multiplied into millions? The beautiful is never plentiful. Then Illinois and Indiana, with their spawning loins, must needs be ordinary.

It is not a question whether we shall be a multitude of people. No, that has been conspicuously decided already; but whether we shall be the new nation, the guide and lawgiver of all nations, as having clearly chosen and firmly held the simplest and best rule of political society.

Now, if the spirit which years ago armed this country against rebellion, and put forth such gigantic energy in the charity of the Sanitary Commission, could be waked to the conserving and creating duty of making the laws just and humane, it were to enroll a great constituency of religious, self-respecting, brave, tender, faithful obeyers of duty, lovers of men, filled with loyalty to each other, and with the simple and sublime purpose of carrying out in private and in public action the desire and need of mankind.

Here is the post where the patriot should plant himself; here the altar where virtuous young men, those to whom friendship is the dearest covenant, should bind each other to loyalty; where genius should kindle its fires and bring forgotten truth to the eyes of men.

It is not possible to extricate yourself from the questions in which your age is involved. Let the good citizen perform the duties put on him here and now. It is not by heads reverted to the dying Demosthenes, or to Luther, or to Wallace, or to George Fox, or to George Washington, that you can combat the dangers and dragons that beset the United States at this time. I believe this cannot be accomplished by dunces or idlers, but requires docility, sympathy, and religious receiving from higher principles; for liberty, like religion, is a short and hasty fruit, and like all power subsists only by new rallyings on the source of inspiration.

Power can be generous. The very grandeur of the means which offer themselves to us should suggest grandeur in the direction of our expenditure. If our mechanic arts are unsurpassed in usefulness, if we have taught the river to make shoes and nails and carpets, and the bolt of heaven to write our letters like a Gillot

pen, let these wonders work for honest humanity, for the poor, for justice, genius and the public good.' Let us realize that this country, the last found, is the great charity of God to the human race.

America should affirm and establish that in no instance shall the guns go in advance of the present right. We shall not make *coups d'état* and afterwards explain and pay, but shall proceed like William Penn, or whatever other Christian or humane person who treats with the Indian or the foreigner, on principles of honest trade and mutual advantage. We can see that the Constitution and the law in America must be written on ethical principles, so that the entire power of the spiritual world shall hold the citizen loyal, and repel the enemy as by force of nature. It should be mankind's bill of rights, or Royal Proclamation of the Intellect ascending the throne, announcing its good pleasure that now, once for all, the world shall be governed by common sense and law of morals.

The end of all political struggle is to establish morality as the basis of all legislation. 'T is not free institutions, 't is not a democracy that is the end, — no, but only the means. Morality

is the object of government. We want a state of things in which crime will not pay; a state of things which allows every man the largest liberty compatible with the liberty of every other man.

Humanity asks that government shall not be ashamed to be tender and paternal, but that democratic institutions shall be more thoughtful for the interests of women, for the training of children, and for the welfare of sick and unable persons, and serious care of criminals, than was ever any the best government of the Old World.

The genius of the country has marked out our true policy, — opportunity. Opportunity of civil rights, of education, of personal power, and not less of wealth; doors wide open. If I could have it, — free trade with all the world without toll or custom-houses, invitation as we now make to every nation, to every race and skin, white men, red men, yellow men, black men; hospitality of fair field and equal laws to all.[1] Let them compete, and success to the strongest, the wisest and the best. The land is wide enough, the soil has bread for all.

I hope America will come to have its pride in being a nation of servants, and not of the

served. How can men have any other ambition where the reason has not suffered a disastrous eclipse? Whilst every man can say I serve, — to the whole extent of my being I apply my faculty to the service of mankind in my especial place, — he therein sees and shows a reason for his being in the world, and is not a moth or incumbrance in it.

The distinction and end of a soundly constituted man is his labor. Use is inscribed on all his faculties. Use is the end to which he exists. As the tree exists for its fruit, so a man for his work. A fruitless plant, an idle animal, does not stand in the universe. They are all toiling, however secretly or slowly, in the province assigned them, and to a use in the economy of the world; the higher and more complex organizations to higher and more catholic service. And man seems to play, by his instincts and activity, a certain part that even tells on the general face of the planet, drains swamps, leads rivers into dry countries for their irrigation, perforates forests and stony mountain chains with roads, hinders the inroads of the sea on the continent, as if dressing the globe for happier races.

On the whole, I know that the cosmic results

will be the same, whatever the daily events may be. Happily we are under better guidance than of statesmen. Pennsylvania coal-mines and New York shipping and free labor, though not idealists, gravitate in the ideal direction. Nothing less large than justice can keep them in good temper. Justice satisfies everybody, and justice alone. No monopoly must be foisted in, no weak party or nationality sacrificed, no coward compromise conceded to a strong partner. Every one of these is the seed of vice, war and national disorganization. It is our part to carry out to the last the ends of liberty and justice. We shall stand, then, for vast interests; north and south, east and west will be present to our minds, and our vote will be as if they voted, and we shall know that our vote secures the foundations of the state, good will, liberty and security of traffic and of production, and mutual increase of good will in the great interests.

Our helm is given up to a better guidance than our own; the course of events is quite too strong for any helmsman, and our little wherry is taken in tow by the ship of the great Admiral which knows the way, and has the force to draw men and states and planets to their good.

Such and so potent is this high method by which the Divine Providence sends the chiefest benefits under the mask of calamities, that I do not think we shall by any perverse ingenuity prevent the blessing.

In seeing this guidance of events, in seeing this felicity without example that has rested on the Union thus far, I find new confidence for the future.

I could heartily wish that our will and endeavor were more active parties to the work. But I see in all directions the light breaking. Trade and government will not alone be the favored aims of mankind, but every useful, every elegant art, every exercise of the imagination, the height of reason, the noblest affection, the purest religion will find their home in our institutions, and write our laws for the benefit of men."

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